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THE PARENT-TEACHER
ORGANIZATION

Its Origins and Development

THE PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION

*Its Origins
and Development*



1944

NATIONAL CONGRESS OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS

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Introduction

THE parent-teacher association is generally recognized as an educational agency of considerable importance. Many professional studies have been made of the effectiveness of the organization as an adjunct to the public school system. Doctors' theses have been written on the subject. In certain sections of the country an effective parent-teacher association is a requirement for standard school rating. To a considerable extent the effectiveness of a school administrator is measured by his ability to maintain satisfactory relationships with the patrons of the school through the medium of the parent-teacher association.

In recent years the organization has increased in importance through the development of the concept of the public school's function in a democracy. The new ideal of the democratic school system implies that the citizens of a community have the responsibility not only to finance the schools but to participate in determining educational goals and objectives. This in turn implies that the citizens must have considerable knowledge of school procedures and community needs. The parent-teacher association has been found the most effective means of bringing this necessary information to the public served by the school.

THE parent-teacher movement is widespread, and its functions are, in the main, generally understood. The letters *P.T.A.* have a well-known, universal significance. The organization has a membership of more than two million six hundred thousand. Local parent-teacher associations, numbering approximately twenty-eight thousand, are found in all states of the Union, in the District of Columbia, and in Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico.

Under these circumstances it is probable that most teachers will have some association with the organization during their professional careers. Whether this experience will be pleasant or a nuisance—a

professional help and a gratifying community experience or an added burden—will depend to a considerable extent on the teacher's attitude and the teacher's understanding of the aims, purposes, and procedures of the organization, its potentialities and its limitations.

As the parent-teacher association has so much to offer the teacher, especially the new teacher, a certain amount of instruction on the parent-teacher movement is an essential part of teacher training. The leading teacher training institutions have recognized this fact by incorporating some consideration of this topic in the curriculum. Satisfactory instructional materials, however, have been lacking. There has been a steadily increasing demand for authentic source material.

As has been intimated, the theories on which the parent-teacher movement is based are generally (though often vaguely) understood. As a rule a superficial treatment of the subject can be handled by the regular teaching staff. However, other important aspects of the parent-teacher movement can best be explained by one who has had actual practice in parent-teacher work—one who understands from first-hand experience how and why the various policies and procedures have developed; how, of necessity, they must be adapted to meet varying local situations; and how adaptations may be made without losing sight of the basic values and objectives.

FOR this reason certain of the teacher training colleges have made it a practice to augment their regular course of instruction with a lecture or a series of lectures given by a parent-teacher leader who has had first-hand experience with the specific problems involved. Some colleges offer special courses on the parent-teacher movement, presented by a parent-teacher leader or by several experienced parent-teacher officials. At the University of California at Berkeley, through the interest of Dr. Edna Bailey, a plan has been in operation for many years under which certain periods of many regular courses were turned over to a parent-teacher official and the subject of the parent-teacher association was considered in its relation to the general content of the course. Regular meetings were also held with the students engaged in practice teaching for a discussion of parent-teacher relationships.

Unfortunately, there is only a limited number of parent-teacher leaders, readily accessible to teacher training institutions, who have had the variety of actual experience with parent-teacher associations that is essential for an overall understanding of the philosophy and function of the organization, and who also have the time, opportunity, and professional qualifications required to carry on this work at the colleges. As a result, little information of a practical, usable nature concerning the parent-teacher movement has been made available to new teachers.

THIS book is designed to meet this long-felt need. Although it has been prepared primarily for use in teacher training institutions, school administrators, supervisors, and teachers in service will also find it helpful in clarifying their position in relation to the local parent-teacher association. Parent-teacher leaders, too, will find herein helpful suggestions concerning the relation of the professional educator to the parent-teacher organization, so that this natural partnership in the interests of the child may be harmonious, satisfying, and effective—each individual serving to the extent of his personal ability and in the capacity in which his greatest contribution can be made.

The reader will note that in the successive chapters certain basic points are returned to and emphasized again and again. This reiteration of emphasis is necessary to a true understanding of the parent-teacher program. The issues involved form so large a part of the thinking of every serious-minded man and woman of today that no presentation on child welfare can afford to ignore them. The fact that each of these issues is presented from a different point of view does not make it necessary to repeat it once. It is hoped that the reader will find this treatment of the

ings, pay dues, and render services as requested by the organization officers; but they feel that the leadership should be in lay hands and that the dominant roles should be assumed by the parents. In other sections there is a public assumption that the parent-teacher association is merely a tool or a mouthpiece for the school administration, and thereby the association loses much of its value as a community agency. It is important that the parent-teacher association function not entirely as a lay organization and not exclusively as a professional one. Its chief value, as Dr. Elwood Cubberly points out in his book *The Principal and His School*, lies in the fact that the two elements are blended.

Indeed, it is largely because professional people have been willing and eager to work with parents that the parent-teacher association has achieved the importance and prestige it enjoys today. In reading the history of the organization from its founding and early days to the present, one discovers that the outstanding leaders of their day in education, social service, health and other fields of child welfare have been closely identified with the parent-teacher movement—not merely rendering lip service, but devoting their talents, time, and thought to shaping the policies and program of the organization. They have been active in guiding the work into useful channels, enlisting the support of others, contributing generously to the publications, speaking at meetings, and in general championing the cause.

IT is impossible even to approximate an estimate of the number of people of this calibre who have been proud to be enrolled as members and to serve the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. A complete roster of all courses on the parent-teacher subject, who in American Social Progress, a parent-teacher leader or by several fields, state and local school officials. At the University of California at Berkeley, classroom the interest of Dr. Edna Bailey, a plan has been in operation for years under which certain periods of many regular courses were turned over to a parent-teacher official and the subject of the parent-teacher association was considered in its relation to the general content of the course. Regular meetings were also held with the students engaged in practice teaching for a discussion of parent-teacher relationships.

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Objects

of PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS

To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, church, and community.

To raise the standards of home life.

To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth.

To bring into closer relation the home and the school that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the training of the child.

To develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for every child the highest advantages in physical, mental, social, and spiritual education.

A Changing Social Landscape

By JOHN E. ANDERSON

Changes in home life and growth of cities following the Industrial Revolution.—New awareness of responsibilities toward children.—Problems created by modern, high-speed living.—Broader conception of education.—Necessity for bridging the gulf between home and school.—Unique functions of a parent-teacher organization.

THE last century and a half may be described as a period of great social change—change so rapid that it is estimated that in any one year, in the period from 1920 on, as much change occurred as took place in twenty years in the early eighteen hundreds or in a century in the fourteen hundreds. Through science and invention, through new modes of manufacture, distribution, and communication, man has literally remade his world. This affects the lives of children and adults alike. If, by some magic process, a man who lived prior to 1800 were suddenly brought back into our world, much of it would be incomprehensible to him.

First, there was the discovery of the machine and the use of power, which concentrated the production of goods in centrally located factories. Before the advent of the machine, the family was the producing unit; materials were made by hand, earnings went to the family as a whole, and fathers trained their sons to follow them in the family vocation. The factory, with its power machines, brought people together as individuals rather than as families to carry on the work of the world, and the wages earned went to individuals and not to families. When wages began to come to individuals, young people threw

off many of their former home restraints and moved out into the world on their own.

Second, power was turned to improving means of communication and travel; steamships replaced sailing ships, and the railroad replaced the wagon and the ox-cart. Later the automobile came within the reach of millions, and the airplane now makes even the automobile begin to seem obsolete. The typewriter replaced the pen, the telegraph and telephone the courier; and the radio and wireless in turn have usurped many of the uses of the telegraph and the telephone. Postal systems connected the entire world; letters moved more rapidly, and many more were written. On the doorstep of every house today is a newspaper that brings into the home the news of events happening in every corner of the world, while a flip of the radio's dial instantly connects the family living-room with far-distant places.

Third, because of factory production and the need of centers of distribution, families moved in great numbers from the country into the cities. This changed the conditions under which human beings had worked for generations and in which they had reared their families. A rural and agricultural civilization became an industrial one.

Fourth, science turned to the conquest of disease. When safe water, sanitation, and improved methods of curing and preventing disease and epidemics were provided, it became possible for people to live together in great numbers, and the life and working years of millions were also prolonged. Life expectancy in 1800 was between thirty and thirty-five years; at present it is between sixty and sixty-five. Because of this, the population doubled and trebled and the pattern of family life was altered; the young were kept at home longer, and at the same time the older members of the family controlled business and finance for longer periods.

Fifth, changes in production and communication and the movement of people from country to city put a great strain upon the laws and conventions under which men had lived for generations. For example, because of the exploitation of children in the early factories, child labor laws came into being; later, because of the ease with which state lines could be crossed by criminals in an automobile, the Fed-

eral Government had to take over some of the police powers formerly held by the states. Political life became both more centralized and more complex.

The Child Comes into His Own

THE century from 1800 to 1900 has also been called the century of the child. More and more, as the importance of child welfare was recognized and provided for, educators themselves saw the need of parents' cooperation in the task. When the time was ripe for the appearance of a parent-teacher alliance, educators had their share in its inauguration.

This took place by a process of orderly evolution. In the early days of the century man became increasingly aware of his responsibilities toward children and developed the methods of universal education now taken for granted as a way of preparing children for this complex civilization. Year by year, as the power-run printing press made books and periodicals easier to produce, the attendance of children at school and the duration of their exposure to education steadily increased. Now, after a century and a half, almost all members of the younger population in the United States have had an eighth-grade education, and a very high proportion has had a high school education, while the number of those each year who receive a college or university degree exceeds the total population of many countries in the sixteenth or the seventeenth century.

These social changes have raised our standard of living; they have given us better health and longer lives, more conveniences and more wants; they have shortened our working hours and given us more leisure; they have resulted in more cultured interests and wider activities. But they have also intensified competition and the speed of living; they have broken down many of our standards and traditions, and they have made us more sophisticated. At the same time that they have widened our contacts, they have substituted remote for local and immediate control of the environment of our children. Thus, the content of children's minds is determined quite as much by material going out from radio workers in New York City, from the

motion picture directors in Hollywood, or from the syndicate writers and comic artists in the larger cities, as it is by the influence of the local community, school, and family. Although these changes have made us more alike in some respects, they have also given us more opportunities to acquire individuality and different patterns of skill. Life has taken on new meanings in some areas, while in others old meanings still hold.

The effects, then, of social change are not simple or uniform. They are complex, and they differ from person to person and from place to place; they are neither wholly good nor wholly bad, but good in some respects and bad in others.

One of the most important aspects of social change is found in our changed attitude toward children. In some earlier societies children were the property of their parents and, as such, were subject even to death at the will of the parent. As late as 1874 it was necessary in order to protect Mary Ellen from neglect and bad treatment by her parents to prove, in a New York City court, that she was an animal, and therefore entitled to the protection that the law gave animals, since no legal action could be brought to protect her as a child. Her case was so striking that it awakened citizens to organize the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

Progress Shifts the Scenes

BUT the changes in attitude toward children involve more than the recognition of children's rights and needs. When universal education first was projected, leaders thought that in it lay a mechanism for insuring continued social progress by quickly and completely changing the nature of human beings. But now we know that changes take place in human habits more slowly than in material objects and that, although the changes that accompany universal education are inevitable and sure, they operate by modifying the point of view of the group over a period of time rather than by inducing radical changes in human nature itself. In the early days of the great movement for popular education it was assumed that society knew exactly what was to be taught and how to teach it. Children thus became the mere passive

recipients of a classical training that had come down for centuries without much change. Even science and mechanics had to fight for their places in the educational scheme. Now education is much more practical, much more closely related to life, much more adapted to the needs of a whole population. Classical training has been supplemented with practical training of many kinds.

A period of rapid social change that modifies every feature of society also affects the relation of children and adults to one another and sets before each generation new demands for adaptation and adjustment. Often, because children and youth adapt to these changes more effectively than do their parents, conflict between the generations is exaggerated.

Because of the later age of marriage resulting from more prolonged educational and vocational training, families are smaller than they were three or four generations ago. In contrast to the large families of yesterday, in which many children grew up together, a typical American family at present consists of parents and two or three children, often widely separated in age, who grow up with relatively few associates except those they meet in the school or on the playground. Hence children have few intimate relations with anyone except their father and mother.

Often the family lives in an apartment house or a tenement, with little free play space and little play material adapted to the child's needs. The older single-family dwelling, with its large yard, its trees and its grass and its backyard, or the farm dwelling with many objects about, offered much more opportunity for the manipulative and constructive activities of the child than does the modern dwelling.

Similarly, the automobile substitutes passive riding and sightseeing for active play, and passive people by the thousands witness sports to see a few active specialists perform. And the comic picture, the radio, and the motion picture, in turn, substitute onlooking and listening for active interests and hobbies. In 1900, nine out of every ten children of junior high school age made collections; now only one out of every ten does so.

The Age of Specialization

ONE general way of describing these changes is to say that the functions of people have become more specific and more widely differentiated. Instead of a home in which food, clothing, and furniture are produced and in which children are given their educational, vocational, and cultural experience, functions are divided up; one group produces food, another clothing, another furniture; some teach children, and others train for vocations; still others give training in dancing or music. And people exchange what they produce, with the result that the producer of food pays someone else to teach his children. So extreme had this tendency become a few years ago that many persons thought of home as only a place to eat and sleep. Every other function seemed to have been given to specialists.

Children left their homes in the morning for school and came back in the late afternoon. Fathers and mothers knew little of what went on in school; teachers knew little of what went on at home. Children in turn knew little or nothing of what their fathers did for a living and had no basis for the respect that grows out of seeing the father employ the skills for which society pays him. Likewise, teachers were highly specialized—some were trained only for kindergarten, others for the second grade, and so on. And at older ages, children were rotated among teachers—one teacher for algebra, another for Latin, another for history.

Although specialization has some decided advantages, in one respect it is harmful. A child is not a thing that can be broken up into little bits, but a whole person who moves and acts as a unit. And somewhere among all these special functions there needs to be a view of the child as a whole, because the child's experiences need to be tied together into an integrated and well-balanced life.

If the teacher assigns homework and the parents are uninterested or unsympathetic, the child suffers because the parent knows nothing of what the school is trying to do. If the child behaves badly on the playground because of worry and tension about constant friction between his father and mother, he suffers because his teachers know nothing of

the emotional problem he is facing. Hence, out of the very specialization that forms an integral part of modern civilization there arises a necessity for tying together the separate agencies that impinge upon the life of the child. Someone must see him as a whole and be interested in coordinating the activities of school, home, and community in order to provide a wholesome background for his development.

A Chance and a Challenge for the P.T.A.

FROM this point of view the growth of a parent-teacher movement is a logical and necessary outcome of the manner in which American life has developed and changed. Not only does it justify its existence as a way of counteracting the tendency toward separation of the child's life into small parts, but it functions in its own right as a means of making services and protections available to all the children of the community. Modern society is often pictured as composed of a series of pressure groups that arise as the inevitable outcome of specialization. Hence both individuals and organizations are needed who are willing to devote their energies to improving the welfare of children, in exactly the same sense that society needs individuals who devote their energies to the progress of science or industry. Who can perform this function better than parents and teachers working together? American mothers and fathers who seek not only to improve the lot of their own children but to raise the welfare level of all children in both the present and the future act in accordance with one of the oldest and best of American traditions. This idealistic and humanistic effort is perhaps the most significant contribution American life has made to the world.

In a time of social change, with new problems constantly arising, education itself suffers from strains and stresses quite as much as do children and parents; it, too, is called upon progressively to make many adaptations to changing social needs. In the large, these adjustments have taken the form of a much broader conception of the nature of education, with an increasing recognition that life and learning are closely interrelated. What the child learns outside the school-room, when he is with his playmates and his parents or listening to

the radio or riding in the automobile, affects his adjustment to life quite as much as does the material presented within the walls of the schoolroom between nine in the morning and three-thirty in the afternoon. The conception that "change in behavior is learning" is of importance both for the individual and for the group, since it means that all agencies affecting the child contribute to his education and experience. The traditional concept that the child should begin his education at the age of six and end it at fourteen or sixteen, and that five hours a day and nine months a year of instruction for eight or twelve years can result in adequate preparation for living, is now recognized as unsound. Now we realize that much vital learning, particularly in areas related to attitude, emotional adjustment, and social relations, takes place outside the schoolroom, and that much of it takes place in the earliest years, before the child ever meets a teacher.

Adults Too Must Learn

AT the same time it has become clear that, in a changing social set-up, adults have to continue their learning in order to meet the new demands of their professions, vocations, and experiences. In the early twenties, for instance, many older persons had to acquire the new skill of driving an automobile, and they proved more inept than their adolescent children. Likewise, industries and businesses have found it necessary to conduct schools, institutes, and professional meetings to enable their employees to keep up to the minute in their particular activities. This seems so commonplace to us now that we forget that not long ago it was assumed that after apprenticeship or schooling the individual would settle down and live thenceforward a fairly stable existence, with little or no further need or effort to adapt.

This broader conception of education, with its extension laterally into all phases of life and longitudinally into all age levels, is one of the most striking characteristics of the modern period. And a lay organization composed of mothers and fathers interested in the welfare of children must, of necessity, not only conduct meetings for its members but develop organized channels of publication and methods of leadership for their benefit, in order to keep them abreast of the

times. Some educators and schools, of course, will insist that the education of children is exclusively their job. Similarly, some parents will make the mistake of interfering in the conduct of the school, because they feel that they must accomplish everything at once. But in time these misinterpretations, which are a part of the process of adjustment, will disappear. A program of ideal home-school cooperation will appear, in which all parents will be welcomed at school and in which all teachers will know the parents of the children they teach. And the parent-teacher organization will actively assist the school and help it to maintain its place in society. In turn, the educator will see that concern with public and community relations, in order to secure the support of an intelligent and alert citizenry, is an important phase of his job and will increase the services given to all children.

The Child and the Future

IN this picture also there is a progressively clearer understanding of the nature and characteristics of the child. This has come about in part through scientific research. When man's success in mastering his physical environment by studying its characteristics and nature had achieved such striking results, it was but natural that he turned to the study of human beings. In so doing he became aware of the fact that the human being, and particularly the child, is not a plastic something to be molded in this or that fashion independently of its nature, but a creature with impulses and desires, needs and wants, that is gradually being adapted to the demands of living in society. Further, as the study of children progressed, it became clear that because each person is an individual in his own right, with his own particular characteristics, he merits individual attention and understanding.

This is a radically different concept from lockstep progression through a school system, or the idea that human beings are to be herded about and forced to do what some overlord wants them to do. In essence, it is the concept of democratic living. With it there comes a change in the view of discipline and of management. Leadership rather than domination and guidance rather than control are stressed. And in the freedom that appears we become concerned with the dis-

covery of what the human being is, how he develops, how he builds up his skills, how he organizes his behavior, and how he adjusts to his environment. As we gain more understanding of children and of the forces in the social environment that mold them, we likewise see more clearly the need for tying together in the life of the individual child those elements of experience which will give him emotional stability and intellectual independence. At the same time, we perceive the need of joint effort and community education to raise the level of community living and so create the good life for all children even in the face of continuous social change.

Achievements that Blaze a Trail

By EDGAR DALE

Active cooperation between parents and teachers.—P.T.A. possibilities.—Publications and other avenues of influence.—Interpreting home and school to each other.—Types of P.T.A. activities: special training for special children; efforts toward securing adequate housing, health, and recreation facilities; building for citizenship, character, and culture.

LET'S suppose you are drawing up a blueprint for a great school system here in America. You want to build a system that will match our democratic heritage—a system that will not only transmit democratic ideas but greatly expand them in the future. One of your first conclusions will be that you cannot do this job alone. Your success will depend a great deal on the kind of help you get from the parents and from the community. So, to build a great and effective school system, you must have cooperation between parents and teachers. You must have an organization through which ideas can be developed and exchanged. In other words, you will need a parent-teacher association.

Interestingly enough, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers started out first as the National Congress of Mothers; but it was not long before its members realized that fathers and teachers are also important. All three member elements have had their due share in the achievements of the organization.

What has the National Congress of Parents and Teachers accomplished? What has it done to improve schools and community life?

Is America a more healthful place to live in because we have had a National Congress of Parents and Teachers? Are all of us more thoughtful about schools because of this organization? Has it improved the curriculum? Is there less juvenile delinquency? Are parents and teachers generally better informed on current issues? Has the parent-teacher movement given all of us a deeper sense of our opportunities to make America a better place to live in?

It would perhaps be unwise to answer a boastful "yes" to all these questions. They are, however, very sobering questions—the kind an organization like the National Congress must face honestly. An examination of the facts in the case from several different angles may be significant. How has the P.T.A. helped, and how might it help even more?

Some Pertinent Facts

FIRST of all, the National Congress has more than two million six hundred thousand members. If every one of these members had the zeal and the interest of the best one thousand members, the organization could remake America in a generation or two.

These more than two and a half million members, of course, are like the members of any organization. They all joined willingly; they all think that schools are important; they are all concerned about the education of their children; and they all want to help. If some of them are not doing their best, it is probably not because they are apathetic or insensitive. It is because too few of their leaders have taken the time or made the effort to inform and enlighten them as to what they can do.

The parent-teacher organization has a national magazine, the *National Parent-Teacher*, and it has a circulation of about one hundred thousand. Perhaps five hundred thousand persons read any particular issue. The influence of the Magazine on these persons is not easy to measure; but month after month it presents ideas that are sound and valuable, ideas that, if parents and teachers would *act* upon them, would change our schools and our families for the better.

The National Congress of Parents and Teachers has put out many

bulletins and leaflets. Did they influence readers to more thoughtful action? Some did, and some did not. They influenced those who were ready for the ideas, in whose thinking the soil for growth of the seed had been prepared. Success begets success. Ideas do not usually grow in barren ground. But Congress publications can and do help to prepare the ground.

Any teacher has had highly illuminating experiences with the P.T.A., experiences repeated a hundred thousand times in communities all over the United States. For example, a rural consolidated elementary and high school in one North Central state had a P.T.A. that sponsored a hot lunch program. This group promoted fund-raising projects; it sponsored father and son banquets and community festivals. Good coffee, good sandwiches, and excellent cake were provided for the monthly meetings, furnishing a setting for friendliness and fellowship—a thing that must never be ignored in building an understanding of mutual problems.

Through the friendships developed as a result of these activities the parents in one family were induced to provide glasses for their son, who until that time had often been sent home from school because of a headache and then punished by his parents when he arrived. Health clinics were set up to arrange necessary tonsillectomies and to investigate some of the health problems of the school children as told teachers directly by their parents.

In a suburb of one of our largest Midwestern cities, P.T.A. members devoted long hours to seeing that the teachers had adequately furnished living quarters. The same group provided widespread recreational opportunities. The P.T.A. brought to this city noted speakers in the fields of child welfare and child guidance, whose contributions had undoubted value in influencing the behavior of the community.

Another example of the influence of the P.T.A. was recently observed in a community where a committee of parents, believing it highly important that young children have a richer experience during their summer vacation period, organized a three-day-a-week morning school in which arts and crafts, music, and athletics play important parts.

Then, too, there was a certain state convention. That convention was addressed by a well-known religious and civic leader, who, speaking just after the Munich Pact of September 29, 1938, said flatly to the audience, "This pact marks the date of the beginning of the dissolution of the French and British empires." The audience gasped; it was not convinced. Yet that statement, thoughtfully acted upon by Americans at that time, could have changed the character of the impending war to an important extent. The national temper at that time tended toward isolationism, and few believed it. This fact is sufficient indication that at the state and national conventions of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers the creative minds of this generation are given an opportunity to talk to the membership, which is a representative sampling of the nation. Parent-teacher conventions and programs are not often stuffy.

Some Specific Achievements

Improvement of Home-School Relations. Parents do not ordinarily think of themselves as experts in teaching. They are, as a rule, willing to trust the judgment of professional educators when it comes to the school training of their children. Yet in a great many instances mutual interpretation of home and school is badly needed; for instance, when some new teaching method is introduced that differs sharply from what parents have been accustomed to expect, or when a new course is added to the curriculum.

This mutual interpretation the P.T.A. supplies as a matter of course. Situated in the strategic middle ground between home and school, the organization is ideally fitted to act as interpreter. Through its unremitting efforts great changes and improvements in school education have been adequately introduced and explained to parents, thus enabling educators to proceed with their work undisturbed by the friction that might otherwise be encountered through lack of understanding on the part of parents.

The other side of the picture is not neglected. More and more it is recognized that a teacher needs a thorough knowledge of every child's home environment if he is to do his best for that particular

child. If the school is failing in any respect, the teacher-parent contact, revealing as it does the child's total background, will bring the failure to light and indicate the best means of correcting it. Here too the P.T.A. can and does help. The furthering of friendly acquaintance between teachers and parents is one of its chief functions.

Needless to say, the parent-teacher organization does not attempt interference with any policy of any school; its National Bylaws contain a definite injunction against such interference. Parent-teacher influence is directed toward the establishment and maintenance of broad educational principles, not of administrative details, which are exclusively the business of the school.

Cooperation in Curriculum Study. Although parents are not often experts in curricular procedure, they do have plenty of common sense and good judgment, and it is only logical that they be permitted to share to the full extent of their ability in shaping the course of study their children are to follow. This they have frequently done through the parent-teacher association. In one Eastern state, P.T.A.'s cooperated in a state study in which they were polled as to the kind of educational practices they wanted in their schools. Their general point of view proved to be modern and forward-looking, establishing definitely the considerable value of the contribution they had to offer.

Service to the Exceptional Child. Enabling the exceptional or the handicapped child to obtain training suited to his individual needs has long been a major interest of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. Recognizing the impossibility of dealing justly or adequately with the exceptional child on the same basis provided for the training of normal children, the organization maintains a national standing committee on the subject and cooperates extensively with community social welfare agencies and like-minded organizations to insure improved conditions for the exceptional child.

Legislation. Legislation for the protection of children and youth, with special emphasis on child labor and all other forms of youth

exploitation, is constantly supported by the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. This phase of the work is discussed in detail in another chapter, "Public Opinion and the P.T.A."

Housing and Sanitation. No matter what standard is used to judge the quality of American housing, there remains a huge number of poorly housed families. The P.T.A. is a strong influence in any community where adequate housing and good sanitary conditions are concerned. Especially since the outbreak of war, with the innumerable problems presented by wartime industrial communities, local units all over the land have been studying local conditions and planning ways to meet the emergency. Schools cannot be expected to do a satisfactory job if the children are living under unwholesome, insanitary conditions. Through its extensive surveys and practical cooperative work, the P.T.A. has definitely improved living conditions all over America.

Service and Recreational Programs; Juvenile Protection. Parents and teachers realize that juvenile delinquency has many causes. They know that, while certain specific remedies may be applied, the basic remedy is better living conditions for all people, with an improved economic status, more cooperative and less competitive living, and less racial and religious prejudice. They want every child in America to know that he belongs to America; that he is a citizen, sharing the duties as well as the rights of a democracy. They know that if children are not permitted to get their satisfactions in normal, balanced ways of living they will get them in unbalanced, abnormal ways.

This knowledge has resulted in a widespread program of child protection based on prevention through the creation of a wholesome environment and the provision of adequate recreational programs and facilities. In some communities young people have been helped to organize a community of their own, a "city within a city" in which they learn the duties and responsibilities of citizenship in an unforgettable way. Intelligent handling of youth already delinquent is also strongly emphasized.

Health Education. It would be quite impossible in a restricted space to enumerate in any detail the almost endless services of the parent-teacher organization to community health. Through its publications, through study courses, through addresses and conferences and consultations with physicians and nurses and public health agencies—above all through its major health project, the Summer Round-Up of the Children—the National Congress of Parents and Teachers conducts a never-ceasing program of health education implemented by action. Immunization against communicable disease is continually emphasized; so is the importance of regular medical and dental examinations for every member of the family; so is the need of adequate nutrition for every citizen, especially every growing boy and girl. In one state on the Eastern seaboard recently the state parent-teacher congress held mass X-ray examinations for tuberculosis at the state convention in an effort to control sources of infection. No field of P.T.A. endeavor has been more widely publicized than the field of health.

Parent Education. Anyone who attends parent-teacher meetings or reads parent-teacher literature knows that the organization is constantly on the alert to compile and distribute new information about furthering the physical, mental, and spiritual development of children. Parenthood nowadays is approaching the status of a profession, for which professional training is needed. Moreover, it has become apparent that this training needs to be integrated with current national and world issues. The National Congress recognizes that nothing in the child's environment—at home, in school, in the community, in the nation, or in the world—is without bearing on the child's development. Accordingly, Congress publications and Congress activities in every field are so planned as to bring out the larger implications of community and world affairs and to help parents reach a better understanding of the magnitude of their responsibilities. Anyone glancing over the study course materials provided through such Congress publications as the *National Parent-Teacher*, *Community Life in a Democracy*, and such pamphlet publications as *We, the Citizens* and

P.T.A. Horizons, will be impressed by the breadth of view to be found therein.

Citizen Education. Nowadays the democratic family is being hailed as the cradle of democracy on a national and world scale, and this is logical enough. The parent-teacher association works within the family and between the family and the school to make every child's experience during his years of growth an experience in genuine democracy, so that when he reaches maturity he will tend to be guided by what he has learned for himself. Interest in public affairs on the part of every member of the family is stimulated by P.T.A. influence. For example, the *National Parent-Teacher* has recently devoted much space to encouragement of the family council, by means of which boys and girls can learn at home what they will need to know as active members of the community.

Character and Spiritual Education. The spiritual and emotional value of good family relations and of a wholesome, gracious, and well-integrated home is obvious. Yet, like many other obviously excellent things, it requires constant attention, constant emphasis. This the P.T.A. makes it a point to provide. The organization is in constant cooperation with agencies and influences that help to build character. Its own ideals are exceedingly high, finding expression in a number of characteristic activities. In one Southern state a P.T.A. organized a committee including representatives of the schools, the health and police authorities, and a specialist in community organization to provide better conditions for character development in the community. In a North Central state the parent-teacher organization cooperated in "Appreciation Week," a prolonged period of thanksgiving and planning. In a New England state the P.T.A. had "a project in personality," consisting of several sessions in which character-building occupations and accomplishments were featured.

Community Culture. Since every community, however small, has cultural assets that are peculiarly its own, the P.T.A. makes itself

responsible for helping to preserve that unique element and to bring out whatever native talents and gifts are dormant in the community. This is particularly important in a country like the United States, into which have poured newcomers from every land under the sun, each with his own national traditions and native sense of values. The blending of all these elements into a truly American culture without loss of the treasure of individual contribution is one of the P.T.A.'s most valuable contributions to community life. For instance, the P.T.A. in one Southwestern state sponsors frequent "fairs of nations" in which the native cultures of several groups are featured.

Cooperation with Other Groups. The National Congress and all its branches cooperate in numerous ways with like-minded organizations and agencies in the community, thus strengthening their own efforts for the welfare of children and youth and at the same time effecting a better fusion of all community efforts in this direction. One of the most outstanding examples of this is found in P.T.A. cooperation with local health departments in programs of immunization, vaccination, and general protection of the health of children.

An Indispensable Element

ALL these efforts, and many others, some of them strikingly ingenious, are described from month to month in "P.T.A. Frontiers," a regular monthly feature of the *National Parent-Teacher*. It is interesting to note how the activities adapt themselves to the needs of the times. The course of events in a changing world has brought about many modifications; but the fruits of parent-teacher endeavor are seen today in American communities from coast to coast. Specific projects and activities are constantly changing with the changes in the national and world scenes; but the fundamental purposes of the organization remain constant.

And these purposes create many influences—influences felt in the elevation of standards for family living; in the maintenance of a high type of free public education; in the conduct of services to the handicapped; in the protection of all boys and girls from exploitation; in

the better understanding of teachers as to what teaching actually means. These influences are all-pervasive. They are not always signed with the seal of the parent-teacher association, but a somewhat closer glance will usually reveal their origin. Without the parent-teacher organization, the average American community would be a very different thing from what it is today. That the change would not be for the better is a fact no thoughtful person can deny.

It would be, in fact, very much for the worse. There is so much more in parent-teacher influence than the mere material effect on the community—more, even, than the subtler psychological effect of an earnest group working continually for child welfare. The parent-teacher movement holds the future within its program. Stable but not static, it changes with the changing needs of the community and the world, and if a new world is to be built after this war the P.T.A. will have a significant share in the building. It is the glorious prerogative of the organization to prepare itself, through study and service, for the time when that contribution will be needed.

Guides and Goals for P.T.A.'S

By ANNA H. HAYES

Community conditions that help to create the need for the P.T.A.—Complete democracy of the organization; its membership and functioning.—Five inclusive goals and their means of achievement.—Guiding principles: noncommercial, nonsectarian, nonpartisan; educational, but not technical; cooperative with agencies of similar objectives.—Methods of meeting the community needs.

THE broad aim of the parent-teacher movement is to develop among homes, schools, churches, and other community institutions and agencies a type of cooperation that will help to preserve and perfect the American way of life. Each generation of children must be provided with an environment suitable for its highest development, physical, mental, social, and spiritual. The combined vision, faith, resourcefulness, and experience of parents, teachers, and friends of youth, brought together in the parent-teacher association, form a powerful implement of community service in thousands of school districts in America today.

The future of democracy depends upon the extent to which children in all walks of life are led to develop sound individual and group attitudes and to apply the principles of truth and justice to the problems of all people. The daily educational experience of every child must be consistently guided toward the discovery and development of his individual talents, his relationships to others, his skills and aptitudes, and his sense of responsible citizenship.

There are too many homes in America today that are ill equipped to make a child's educational experiences at home and those in school even reasonably consistent. In a house that furnishes inadequate shelter for a family inadequately clad and inadequately fed, the struggle for existence or a sort of day-to-day drifting precludes any possibility of discovering the latent talents of a child or of developing a supplementary home program of directed learning.

In a home where parents are chiefly concerned with material and social success there is even less likelihood that attitudes and practices will be developed to make the child's home experience a harmonious continuation of his experiences at school.

In far too many schools the teacher still plans her work toward teaching a certain set of skills, without regard for the individual aptitudes of the child or for the ideals of the home from which he has come. She still plans the child's day in school as an experience completely severed from his day at home.

The average community in America continues to approve the existence and operation of many institutions that are bound to destroy the sound teachings of good homes and good schools within the same community.

Therefore, the parent-teacher association has an immediate function: offering a medium through which the philosophy and program of learning of the most enlightened homes and the philosophy and program of learning of the most dependable schools may become available to all the people in the community. "It unites the two greatest forces in education, homes and schools, that they may cope successfully with the third major influence in a child's life, the community."

The parent-teacher association is the only organization in America today that makes "inclusiveness" an important consideration in the selection of its membership. It welcomes eagerly fathers, mothers, teachers, and all other friends of children and youth, without regard for social, economic, political, professional, or religious status.

Because it recognizes no social barriers, the parent-teacher association opens a way across the social barriers that keep almost any community, even in America, from achieving true unity of effort. It gives

parents a sense of belonging to the school and teachers a means of belonging to the community. It gives the child an opportunity for early participation in the life of the world he will some day control. It unites the strength of more than two million six hundred thousand members upon a single objective, the well-being of children and youth.

The Goals to Be Attained

SPECIFICALLY, the Objects of the parent-teacher movement are stated in five brief sentences:

To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, church, and community.

To raise the standards of home life.

To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth.

To bring into closer relation the home and the school that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the training of the child.

To develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for every child the highest advantages in physical, mental, social, and spiritual education.

I. In its effort to promote the welfare of children and youth the parent-teacher movement recognizes that "what the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all its children." Its program of study, service, and fellowship is based and continuously developed upon that important premise.

Accordingly, it opens a way through which the people in every community may realize their interdependence. It gives them a place to pool all common problems related to children and youth. It turns community problems into shared responsibilities. It makes possible a way to "utilize the experiences of other communities in meeting the needs of the local community," in any question whatever that concerns children.

Too, it furnishes a medium through which community standards may be established. When unwholesome influences are discovered, the P.T.A. attempts to unite with all community agencies in an effort to replace them with constructive, character-promoting influences. It seeks to develop resources for the help of physically or mentally

handicapped, socially or spiritually maladjusted children and young people.

It seeks to make the home of every child a contributing unit in a community that guarantees to its children protection from disease, accident, and degrading influence, offering them instead an environment of beauty, culture, and enriched opportunity.

II. To raise the standards of home life, the parent-teacher association constantly encourages parent education. Professionally planned courses are available for parents of children at the preschool, grade school, and high school age levels. Study groups devoted to child study on all age levels, parent-child relationships, family relationships, home management, health, and nutrition are essential parts of the work of every effective parent-teacher unit.

The fundamental philosophy of the parent-teacher movement exalts the profession of parenthood, attempting to awaken in every parent a desire to give the child something better than mere food, shelter, and clothing; yet the parent-teacher program none the less includes promotion of the ideal of a decent, convenient home, located in clean, orderly, wholesome surroundings, as the right of every child.

III. To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, through its 28,000 units, undertakes a continuing study of conditions that bear directly or indirectly on youth. Studies are appraised by local, state, and national committees; existing and pending legislation is carefully checked against the situations found to prevail, and recommendations to endorse or to disapprove legislative measures are made with the utmost care.

Parent-teacher legislative committees are on the alert quite as much to discover and defeat legislation that threatens the well-being of children as to discover and promote measures designed for child welfare. As public opinion must finally decide upon all laws for public welfare, the parent-teacher movement finds its most fruitful legislative effort to be the shaping of public opinion. To this end the studies of

a special legislation program committee are made available to all local parent-teacher associations.

IV. As the education of a child is an uninterrupted process throughout his waking hours, we may hope for maximum results only if the influences that affect his developing personality throughout his every day of life are harmoniously correlated. In an attempt to achieve at least some correlation of these educational processes, the parent-teacher movement has developed a program of study, service, and fellowship to bring parents, teachers, and children into a sympathetic alliance.

The spheres of interest and responsibility for parent and teacher constantly overlap; hence the P.T.A. must "determine as wisely as it can the functions of the partners in education of the child, that each shall perform his part and not encroach upon or interfere with the function of the other."¹ Through the P.T.A., parents and teachers can come to a mutual understanding of their respective fields of service and learn to cooperate in all fields of mutual interest.

V. "To develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for every child the highest possible advantages in mental, physical, social, and spiritual education" sets for the parent-teacher association the important task of *interpreting education*, its objectives, its program, and its methods, to the general public as well as to its own members.

The Need of Flexibility

THE public, although ready to accept with approval all other scientific developments in the forward movement of civilization, still appears reluctant to admit that educational objectives and methods of teaching also must change as time goes on. The parent-teacher movement attempts to safeguard the modern school as an indispensable institution. The new objectives, the new curriculums, the improved teaching methods, and the expanding extracurricular activities are

¹ Reynolds, Rollo G.: From an address delivered at the Parent-Teacher Conference in New York, December 6, 1929.

brought directly to the public by means of demonstrations, exhibits, discussions, lectures, and forums in the regular programs of the P.T.A.

Since the school program must at all times meet the changing needs of the community, administrators frequently invite committees of parents to meet with curriculum revision groups. This enables parents to make a direct contribution to the planning of the school's program. It enables them also to carry back to the parent-teacher association the results of their discoveries. "Open house," "visiting day," and "community school day" give parents an opportunity to confer informally with teachers and to see the school in actual operation. All such devices lead the patrons of the school (and, in some measure, the general public) to a clearer understanding of school objectives.

Basic in parent-teacher philosophy is the ideal of equal educational opportunity for all children. The need to equalize educational opportunity among the states, between rural and urban communities within the states, and for all children within every community, is a constant challenge to the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. The organization has given all-out aid toward adequate financial support of schools.

A program of welfare is undertaken also. In this program the P.T.A. becomes a clearinghouse that supplies counsel and even material aid to maladjusted and needy children. Health and recreation programs, school lunch and general nutrition projects, and youth guidance clinics are among the P.T.A. activities conducted to develop public responsibility for children and youth. Every effort is made to translate the idea of children *en masse* into the concept of individual children whose progress—mental, physical, social, and spiritual—is the individual concern of all citizens.

The Pattern of Endeavor

Guiding Principles. Throughout the development of the organization from the original National Congress of Mothers, the *policies* and *guiding principles* of the parent-teacher movement have been determined by representatives of the whole membership rather than by

a central group. Thus they have been developed from the experiences of members and leaders in every section of America over a long span of years. They represent the cooperative victory of parent-teacher units over problems that have handicapped the progress of the movement.

Policies. I. The parent-teacher association is noncommercial, non-sectarian, and nonpartisan. No commercial enterprise and no candidate may be endorsed by it. Neither the name of an association nor the name of any officer in his official capacity is ever used "in connection with a commercial concern or with any partisan interest or for other than the regular work of the association."

Because the parent-teacher association includes representatives of every commercial enterprise, adherents of every religious faith, and persons of every political preference in America, it is obvious that no enterprise undertaken jointly by the membership can favor any particular product or process of commerce or any faith or any political party without violating the loyalties of some of its members.

Salé of commercial magazines, periodicals, books, study club memberships involving the purchase of books, and popular household appliances are frequently offered as the basis of "attractive profits" to the association. They are always refused. Such sales violate the non-commercial policy of the Congress.

Parent-teacher leaders are frequently beset with requests for lists of members, often in connection with an enterprise promising great benefit to the organization or to the community. However, violation of confidence, use of the membership lists for advertising purposes, and pressure upon individuals have made it necessary to establish the policy of withholding these lists from all outside agencies.

Since among parent-teacher members there are persons of every faith in America, leaders are admonished to guard carefully against offering any devotional exercises in parent-teacher meetings that can violate the loyalty of adherents of any faith. Religious discrimination must not restrict the selection of officers and committee members. It must not prevent important service by any member.

Partisan activities or endorsement of candidates for public office

by parent-teacher groups or by members in any official capacity is inconsistent with the nonpartisan policy. However, the Congress sponsors an active legislative program and encourages local parent-teacher groups to develop interest in child welfare and educational legislation. Legislative measures of general significance to child welfare must not, however, be confused with measures designed for the advancement of a political party or interest, and certain basic guides have been set up by the National Congress for evaluation of any measure and its application to the parent-teacher program.

II. The purpose of the association is educational. It does not seek to direct the technical activities of the schools or to control their policies.

Plans for parent-teacher programs of study and service are developed through the combined effort of parents and teachers. Teachers are invariably numbered among the officers and committee members. Sometimes changes of school policy may result from this interchange of ideas, but the association adheres to a strict policy of noninterference with the technical administration of the school.

III. The association enters into membership with Congress groups only.

Cooperation with other agencies engaged in similar work and holding to similar objectives is an approved policy for parent-teacher associations. Official agencies, such as the U. S. Office of Education, the Children's Bureau, the National Education Association, the U. S. Public Health Service, and state and local health and educational units contribute valuable assistance by making available information and experience important to the common welfare. Similar state and local agencies, conferences, and councils promoting plans of work that conform to parent-teacher objectives likewise offer valuable and legitimate avenues for cooperation. However, the parent-teacher association does not enter into membership with any but Congress groups, and money collected for membership dues is not diverted to the support of outside agencies.

Geared to the Moment's Need

ACCCEPTING for its chief responsibility the growth and development of the normal child as affected by gradually altering national values, the parent-teacher movement is sensitive to changes in the social and economic structure of our country and is quick to accept the challenge of a disturbed social order.

Although its essential policies can be altered only through a gradual process of orderly evolution (in many instances involving a change in the bylaws), its structure allows great freedom for diversified emphasis on basic principles; thus programs of national scope and significance may be quickly set up to meet rapidly developing emergency situations of all kinds.

In 1927 the Congress accepted as its platform the Seven Objectives of Education as set out by the National Education Association. Parent-teacher associations in every state took up the study of these objectives, using them as a basis for conferences, conventions, study groups, and programs at regular monthly parent-teacher meetings. As a direct result, great numbers of citizens learned to accept education as a task to be shared cooperatively by parents and teachers.

After the White House Conference of 1930, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers accepted the challenge to promote the ideals set up in its findings—the Children's Charter. Added emphasis on community responsibility for all children became a specific goal for parent-teacher groups everywhere. White House Conference committees were set up in all the states, inviting the cooperation of other interested agencies. Publications and programs issued by the Congress reflected the Children's Charter emphasis, and at least one state-wide conference devoted to the program was held in each state.

In 1932, when a national economic depression threatened the very existence of public education, the National Congress accepted the task of helping to hold public education as a heritage for the children of America. Under the slogan "There Are No Outsiders in Education," parent-teacher leaders sought to awaken parents and school patrons to the realization that the public school system could not

survive without immediate, vigorous support. Parent-teacher associations rallied with gratifying strength, and even during the dark days of depression registered a signal increase in membership. Much remains to be accomplished, but Federal aid for education to equalize educational opportunities has been approved, and legislation to that end has had the endorsement of the Congress for years.

Recently "Education for Democracy" has been accepted by the Congress as a nation-wide goal. The Congress has issued and distributed, through the *National Parent-Teacher* (its official magazine), the *National Congress Bulletin*, and other Congress publications, significant material designed to enable the local parent-teacher unit to help prepare youth for citizenship in the postwar world. Materials prepared by the Educational Policies Commission have been distributed to parent-teacher associations and members and are being used for public forums, conferences, and study groups. Members of the Commission have contributed to the *National Parent-Teacher* and other Congress publications many articles analyzing the findings of that body. Parent-teacher leaders in all states have been invited to serve as consultants on the Educational Policies Commission.

Emergency and the P.T.A. Program

WITH the entrance of the United States into the war, "Education for Democracy" has become even more important as a parent-teacher goal. The problem presented by the rising cost of education becomes more acute with the rising cost of waging the war; the need for men and women in the armed forces and in war industries is taking its toll of capable school teachers; the public, drawn into the conflict in a myriad of ways, is inclined to minimize the importance of school in the face of the struggle for victory. The war effort of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers recognizes (a) the need for stabilizing forces to counteract the abnormal home and community situations occasioned by the war emergency, and (b) the need for a public mind alert to the obligation of the individual toward achieving victory and an intelligent peace.

The program calls for special emphasis on the following areas of service: 1. Conservation of human and natural resources. 2. Registration and identification of children. 3. Health through improved nutrition and increased production of protective foods. 4. Education—maintenance of the high standards already attained and meeting the increased stress imposed by the war emergency. 5. Upbuilding of national morale through family morale and recreation. 6. Prevention of epidemics through immunization. 7. Support of the U. S. War Savings Bond and Stamp Campaign. 8. Nutrition and consumer education. 9. Juvenile protection to prevent delinquency. A special committee on postwar planning has been created to study specific postwar problems affecting children, the home, and the community. The responsibility of Americans toward the establishment of a new world pattern will also be studied. The cooperation of like-minded organizations will be sought.

In the manifold duties that emerge from the present conflict, the task of the parent-teacher association is clear. "The weaving of the new fabric of American life is in our hands. We must see that all our democratic freedoms are retained and that all the mistakes, flaws, inequalities, and irregularities of the old pattern are eliminated. We must make the texture strong enough to bear the stress of a new era."¹

Education for democracy in a world at peace is a continuing goal.

¹ Bingham, Florence C.: Message to Local Presidents, *National Congress Bulletin*, March 1942.

The Distribution of Effort

By CATHERINE C. MULBERRY

Flexibility of structure.—Elementary school P.T.A.: membership, officers, meetings, study groups.—Special functions of the P.T.A. in rural districts, high schools, colleges, special schools, and preschool groups.—Structure and purposes of council and district organization.—State and national conventions, their meaning and their importance.—The Board of Managers.

IT HAS always been the aim of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers to make membership easily available to all, as the strength that lies in numbers can be made a mighty force in realizing parent-teacher ideals. No obstacles are placed in the path of any applicant for membership, for every new member is considered a new asset to the work. Anyone who desires to pursue the Objects of the organization and is willing to pay the nominal dues required is eligible. Anyone eligible is qualified for full participation, as the program is flexible enough to allow every member to serve effectively. The National Congress now has a branch in every state in the Union, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

The All-Important Local Unit. As the greatest enterprises are founded upon lesser tasks expertly done, so the mightiest organizations are dependent for their total strength upon the lesser units that supply the organizational machine with the motor power for action. The National Congress of Parents and Teachers is composed of thousands of local units. These associations are found in cities, in small towns, in rural county seats, in college communities, and in the open country. Each has its local characteristics and follows its local pattern, but the underlying single purpose of promoting the welfare of children and

youth unites them all and lends continuity and dignity to their work. The local P.T.A. in any community lies at the very core of community life. The sound financial position, the admirable modern equipment, and the enriched curriculum of many an American public school are the direct results of local parent-teacher activities. The greatly improved family life in many an American household has been made possible by the P.T.A.

The local unit is what the average member means when he speaks of "our P.T.A." It is the unit that does the work in "our community." Any member of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers who understands the ideals and endeavors of the organization as a whole will be proud of his membership therein and will value the inspiration and help to be derived therefrom; but his everyday, all-the-time allegiance is to the local unit, whose achievements take place daily before his eyes.

District and Council. Nowadays, particularly since the parent-teacher organization has grown and spread to such a phenomenal extent, additional units are necessary to a well-integrated program. Of course, the local unit, the state congress, and the National Congress are and will remain the three major divisions of the organization. States in which the membership is large have found it advisable and effective to divide the state into several districts.

The organization of these districts varies from state to state, in line with the Congress policy of allowing for local variation in every phase of the work. In some cases a vice-president is elected to represent a large region. In others a district director or a district president administers the affairs of the district and serves as its representative on the state board of managers.

Sometimes these district leaders are elected by the state at large; sometimes they are chosen by their own districts only. District representation, support, and method of election are determined by the bylaws of the particular state.

The duties of a district director or president include strengthening parent-teacher work within the district and representing the

state in answering questions from local units with regard to policy and procedure. Some districts are very highly organized, with a complete staff of officers and chairmen; these often publish their own district bulletins and maintain their own offices. It is at once apparent that a district organization of this dynamic type can form a highly effective link between the state congress and the local units.

The council differs from the district in that it is organized from the local level upward rather than from the state level downward. A county or a city large enough to have a number of local P.T.A. units generally finds it a great advantage to have some means of pooling plans and ideas for the common good. A county or city council of parent-teacher associations is the logical result.

The voting body of a council is composed of representatives from each local unit in Congress membership in the town or the county concerned. The council elects its own officers, holds regular meetings and schools of instruction, and offers opportunity for local unit leaders to confer on their common problems. A local leader who attends a council meeting learns what neighboring associations are doing and is enabled to pass on his own experiences and suggestions to others. He is given opportunity also to participate in the work of study groups on leadership. The natural result is a strongly vitalized P.T.A. program in the city or county to which the council belongs.

A fact to bear in mind, however, is that both councils and districts are merely facilitating devices. They strengthen the program and expedite the work, but they are not to be considered separate parts of the organization, as are the local unit and the state congress.

State and National Patterns. The state congress is an organization of great significance. It elects its own officers and holds its own annual or biennial convention. Its funds and affairs are governed by a duly constituted board of managers, composed of officers and the chairmen of standing committees. (In a few states, council or district presidents also serve as members of the state board.) It is represented on the Board of Managers of the National Congress by its president. State congresses carry on a perpetual program of study and action within

the several states, at the same time cooperating continuously with the National Congress on the one hand and the local P.T.A. on the other. Most states publish a monthly bulletin of their own.

The National Congress of Parents and Teachers holds a convention in May of each year. This convention is the governing body of the Congress; each state branch is entitled to be represented by its president, three other state officers (or their alternates), and one delegate for each one thousand members or major fraction thereof, as shown by the books of the national treasurer.

The officers of the National Congress are a president, ten vice-presidents,¹ a secretary, and a treasurer. Each is elected for a three-year term. These officers, together with the state presidents, the chairmen of national standing committees, and the president of The National Parent-Teacher, Inc., constitute the National Board of Managers.

The Board convenes twice each year, in September and in May. According to the National Bylaws, it has "all power and authority over the affairs of the National Congress during the interim between annual conventions, except that of modifying any action taken by the convention."

A smaller administrative body, the Executive Committee, meets somewhat more frequently. This committee is composed of all the officers and three members-at-large elected by the Board of Managers from the membership of that body. Between meetings of the Board, the Executive Committee acts for the Board, takes over in emergencies, makes recommendations to the Board, plans the convention program, and appoints the office and field employees and fixes their salaries. It may not take any action that conflicts with the action of the Board.

The Board of Managers is empowered to create such standing committees as are needed to carry on the program. The objects and policies of the parent-teacher organization are almost entirely constant, but the shifting of emphasis that results from changing needs may introduce new standing committees and abolish old ones.

Certain administrative committees seem likely to be perpetual—

¹ These include a first vice-president, a second vice-president, and eight regional vice-presidents. For the regional division of the National Congress, see National Congress Officers, Appendix, page 136.

Programs, Founders Day, Publicity, Membership, Congress Publications, and Rural Service. Others answer the needs of the times, covering extensive fields of research and action—legislation, health, school education, juvenile protection, parent education, safety, recreation, and reading and library service. Still others are concerned with specific phases of the training of the individual child—those on music, art, narcotics education, audio-visual education, citizenship, the exceptional child, social hygiene, mental hygiene, character and spiritual education, and education for home and family life.

Each of these national standing committees is responsible for the national promotion of parent-teacher work in its particular field, and all of them cooperate in a united effort to integrate the program. State congresses usually set up corresponding committees, although there is some variation here.

The plans of work of all national chairmen are approved by the Executive Committee of the National Congress, and their annual reports are included in the year's *Proceedings*. The *Proceedings* also include convention addresses, digests of convention conferences, and the annual reports of the national officers and the state presidents.

The Question of Dues

PARENT-TEACHER dues are extremely low. This is in accord with the policy of the organization, which seeks to eliminate all barriers to effective membership.

The dues are all-inclusive for membership in the national, the state, and the local unit. The amount paid by the individual members to the local association is determined by the association itself; the only absolute requirement is that it be sufficient to include the 5 cents per capita dues allotted to the national organization and the stipulated per capita dues required by the state organization. Dues on the local level are not expected to cover the cost of projects and activities. They may, therefore, be set at an exceedingly low figure.

Similarly, the state congress votes on the amount of dues to be paid by local units to the state, including the national portion of five cents per individual member per year.

The method of collecting dues is optional on both state and local levels. Persons wishing to join pay their dues into the treasury of the local unit. The local treasurer transmits the state and national portions to the state treasurer, who then forwards the national portion to the national treasurer.

The question of dues allotted for the support of district and council organizations is settled on a basis of responsibility. That is to say, if the state congress itself carries nearly all the responsibility for the state program, its districts will receive only a limited allotment. If, on the other hand, the districts carry heavy or extensive responsibility, a commensurate allotment is made. The same relation exists between the local units and the council.

Throughout the Congress, great emphasis is laid on keeping the dues at the lowest level possible for efficiency. It is the sincere desire of the organization that no prospective member be deterred from enrolling because of unnecessary expense. Some of the organization's most valuable work is done in communities where there is literally not a cent to spare beyond the most urgent need. A national program like that of the parent-teacher association cannot be conducted without funds, but every effort is made to reduce costs as much as possible.

What Is a "Typical" P.T.A.?

BY MEANS of this framework of National Congress, state congress, and local unit, with the auxiliary district and council divisions, the work of the parent-teacher association is extended throughout the nation. A particular study should be made, however, of the various kinds of local units; for, strictly speaking, there is no "typical" P.T.A. The variations between local units express, through their adaptation to the needs of special groups in different communities, the insistence of Congress policy upon one of the unique characteristics of the parent-teacher movement—its flexibility, its power to adjust itself to changed and changing situations.

All parent-teacher activity, in whatever sphere, is founded upon a basis of demonstrated need. It follows that no rigidly defined system can be resorted to. The different age levels of children, their varying

environments, the economic and cultural variations among their backgrounds, and the wide discrepancies between educational opportunities and facilities in various sections of the country must always be considered before any activity is launched.

The Elementary School P.T.A. The parent-teacher group most nearly approaching the "typical" is the elementary school association. By far the largest number of parent-teacher associations belong in this classification.

Elementary school associations generally meet once a month, in the school building as a rule. Their membership is made up largely of the parents and teachers of the school children, although other public-spirited citizens who are interested in child welfare may, and frequently do, attend. It is a matter of constant parent-teacher emphasis that the protection of children and youth is everybody's business, and everybody in the community is more than welcome to share any and all parent-teacher deliberations.

The monthly program varies according to the tastes and needs of participants and members. There may be a speaker, whose address is preceded or followed, or both, by musical selections; there may be a panel discussion, a symposium, or an open forum on some topic connected with child welfare. Sometimes the child welfare message is presented by means of a dramatic skit or a pageant. Wherever possible, opportunity for free discussion from the floor is given. Refreshments and a social hour usually follow; during this period parents and teachers become better acquainted through their common interest in the children and are enabled to discuss still further the topics that have been brought out at the meeting.

The hour of meeting also varies. When the meeting is held in the afternoon, most of those present are mothers of children in the school. The increasing emphasis on the need of father participation in parent-teacher work has led to an increase in evening meetings in many localities.

As a rule, the officers of the elementary school P.T.A. are parents. Teachers and school administrators, however, exercise a strong influence and are not infrequently elected to office.

Study Groups: In addition to the regular meetings of the association, study groups are often organized to investigate some particular phase of parent-teacher interest, such as nutrition, reading guidance, or curriculum planning. Professional persons frequently serve as leaders, and serious and effective work is done. Many state congresses furnish study outlines to local unit groups, and the official magazine of the Congress, the *National Parent-Teacher*, carries two study courses each year—both fully implemented with questions and study helps.

Organization: The regular elementary school association has the usual staff of officers—a president, one or more vice-presidents, a secretary, and a treasurer. These, with the chairmen of standing committees, constitute the local board of managers, or executive board, which governs the affairs of the association in accordance with the local bylaws. There is a program committee to arrange the monthly presentations, and there are various other committees to study, report, and make recommendations in their particular fields. The local unit chooses for itself which of the standing committees of the state and national congresses it will duplicate within its own organization.

Representation at the state convention is the responsibility of duly chosen delegates. These delegates vote on the bylaws, officers, and program of the state congress.

Many local units also have “room representatives.” In these there are occasional meetings to bring together the room teacher, the room representative, and the parents of all the children in the room.

Membership in the elementary school association is likely to be large. The great variety of programs and suggestions offered, the easy accessibility of the school, and the eager interest of the elementary school child sufficiently account for this. The elementary school age level is the level at which children are most interested in bringing their parents into membership.

The Widening Range

WITH regard to its organizational framework, the elementary school P.T.A. may be considered, broadly speaking, the “typical” parent-teacher association, for this framework is essentially similar

to that in most of the special groups now to be discussed. Study groups, too, may be organized in connection with any type of unit. But at this point the variation begins. Associations that are obliged to struggle with handicaps of distance from the school, lack of an appropriate meeting place, and indifference or inertia in the community, find it necessary to adapt their programs to their necessities and to proceed on a basis of their own. This has led to the setting up of several different types of local unit, all of which are represented by flourishing organizations in many localities.

Serving the Rural Schools. In spite of transportation handicaps and the lack of numbers, many a rural unit functions in practically the same manner as does the association in a city. In fact, the rural P.T.A. often exemplifies the very highest ideals of the organization. There is a natural advantage in the fact that rural parents and teachers and children live close to the heart of community life; there are not nearly so many distractions to come between them and their common problems as are found in a city, or even, for that matter, in a small town. Too, one is likely to find fathers participating in rural P.T.A. work to a much greater extent than elsewhere. In a rural community the school occupies first place in the hearts of the citizens; it is the center from which all community interests and activities radiate, and it draws the local interest like a magnet. Many rural parent-teacher groups have demonstrated that they can carry on their programs and projects as effectively as any unit in a larger community. The rural P.T.A. has done and is doing important work toward providing the conditions and the compensation for rural teachers that will be needed to solve the teacher shortage problem.

High Schools Need the P.T.A. The high school parent-teacher association draws its members from a varied group. However, most of them have come up with their children through the elementary school P.T.A., and are therefore seasoned parent-teacher workers. And it is a good thing they are; for young people of high school age, with their adolescent tendency to overemphasize their independence,

are greatly in need of wise and careful guidance that will not antagonize them.

These boys and girls are not often sympathetic toward the idea of school visiting by parents. They find it "easier to take" when it assumes the form of parent-teacher activity, especially when they themselves are given a share in the planning and carrying out of the program. The high school P.T.A. has a particularly important function here—interpreting the school to the home and the home to the school, and both the home and the school to the young people.

High school associations in most localities today are still developing new avenues of service. The need for their services is not yet as widely recognized as it should be, and the field for expansion is great.

The P.T.A. Goes to College. An even newer and very promising area of development is that of the junior college or college P.T.A. Many cities now have their own junior colleges, and these boast large and influential parent-teacher associations. It is notable in this field that a great many of the members are not parents of students in the school. Public-spirited citizens and interested community leaders are active in strengthening the college, expanding its services, and raising its standards, and they find the college P.T.A. a ready medium for their efforts.

Prominent alumni, too, are usually much interested. They do much to improve the financial status of the college; they help in the public interpretation of its aims and its methods; and they make suggestions for adapting the college program to the needs of the students. Here again the association's work in parent education, which helps parents to understand and enter into the lives and interests of their sons and daughters, is vital.

Meeting Unusual Needs. A similar interest on the part of public-spirited citizens and influential leaders is associated with special schools created to care for handicapped or delinquent children. In the case of the latter the parent-teacher association has a supremely important task to perform, for it acts *in loco parentis* to these un-

fortunate boys and girls, providing food, clothing, and vocational opportunities. As the majority of delinquent children owe their sad situation to the breakdown of their homes in one way or another, they often have no other resource to look to. Associations connected with these special schools often make themselves responsible for the state and local maintenance of their support.

Preschool Practices. Recently there has sprung up a strong national feeling that greater special emphasis on the needs of the preschool child is called for. This is no new idea to the National Congress of Parents and Teachers; indeed, much of it is probably the direct result of Congress practice and recommendations. In line with this, Congress units everywhere are placing new stress on the organization of preschool groups in response to the many public expressions of need.

The preschool organization is frequently a branch or a subsidiary group of an elementary school P.T.A., in which case it is known as the "preschool section." Its chairman may serve on the board of the elementary school P.T.A., in order to represent the preschool parents and to maintain continuous relations between the two bodies. Often the elementary school P.T.A. organizes the preschool group and furnishes the leader. This is an excellent arrangement, insuring, as it does, continuity of organization and leadership. Preschool children quickly become school children, and parents already habituated to thinking in terms of educational problems are better equipped to guide them.

Occasionally a group of parents of preschool children may organize as an independent Congress unit, unconnected with any elementary school group. Such a unit may meet in a member's home, in a church parlor, or in the local library, confining its work exclusively to the problems of preschool care and training. Preschool units may also be organized in connection with nursery schools, day nurseries, and other such groups.

As the importance of the preschool movement increases, it will perhaps in time become a matter of course that every P.T.A. shall

have its preschool section. Young parents would find such an arrangement a great help to them in the midst of their new responsibilities.

An All-Inclusive Service

THE National Congress of Parents and Teachers, as we have seen, endeavors to cover every area of child welfare by means of some effective and pertinent program of action. Whether a Congress unit is located in a crowded coal mining section, a sophisticated suburb, or an average American small town; whether the member is an officer of the National Congress, a chairman of an important committee, or just a parent attending a local meeting, the opportunity to serve is there.

Children cannot speak for themselves. Through the united efforts of the parent-teacher association their welfare is given the priority it deserves in the affairs of the community, the state, and the nation. Parents and teachers everywhere have an opportunity to learn, to confer, and to act together in the interests of childhood and youth. The distribution of parent-teacher effort after the pattern just described is a strong factor in the organization's effectiveness.

Coast-to-Coast Coverage

By MINNETTA A. HASTINGS

The National Congress as made up of many units. — The National Congress as an entity. — The National Office and its activities. — National Congress publications. — Types of effective publicity. — National field service. — National and state conventions. — Cooperation with other national agencies. — National Congress finance.

WHAT is the program of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers? This question is often asked of leaders in parent-teacher work. There is no simple, brief answer, and there is no list of activities that covers all the interests of this large and widespread organization.

When "The National Congress of Parents and Teachers" is interpreted as meaning the whole of the membership in all local associations grouped into state branches, *the program is found in the area of interest outlined in the Objects* and is worked out in accordance with the Guiding Principles developed by the experience of years. These Objects are amplified and interpreted by the "findings" and "resolutions" of the annual national convention and the various state conventions, as well as by statements of policy issued from time to time by the National Board of Managers and the state boards. While the basic purposes do not change, there is great flexibility in the planning of the programs based on them. Each local association chooses for itself the parts of the entire program that are best adapted to its own needs at any particular time and, at the same time, does its part in furthering any concerted state or national effort. For example, all states endorse and support the legislation program of the National Congress; but one state, because of local need, may give special emphasis to maternal and child health services; one to equali-

zation of educational opportunity; and another to child labor. Because of these facts, it is possible in an overall view of the program to find a wide range of activities and methods of work; yet all these have proved their right to inclusion. All serve the objectives toward which all parent-teacher work is directed.

National Organization

WHEN "The National Congress of Parents and Teachers" is taken to mean the national organization as an entity, apart from its state branches or their local associations, a clearer picture of its program and of the services designed to further this program is obtained. Two different types of services are carried on: (1) those involved in the relationships between the national and state organizations; and (2) those which are necessary to furthering the work of the National Congress as an organization working on a national basis. Everything done by the national organization is designed to further its general purposes and to be of service to the state branches in one of the following ways:

- By supplying leadership to the state branches.
- By training state and local leaders.
- By furnishing them timely information on many subjects.
- By giving guidance to state and local chairmen in many fields of interest.
- By constantly reinterpreting the Objects in the light of current situations.
- By unifying and integrating the efforts of all associations through certain minimum bylaws requirements, at the same time leaving much freedom to states and local groups.
- By acting as a clearinghouse for the ideas and experiences of the many units.
- By making national contacts and sharing in cooperative efforts on a national level.
- By securing nation-wide publicity through press and radio for the parent-teacher program.
- By doing everything that may arise within the area of parent-teacher interest at the national level.

To accomplish these ends and to offer the wide variety of services the state branches expect from the national body, a certain amount of machinery is needed. All officers of the national organization work

actively at their own tasks and also help direct the activities of the necessary staff. No policy-making decisions come from the staff to be passed on to state and local groups. According to the system of representative government set up in the National Bylaws, the staff carries out the policies approved by the members of the National Board of Managers, who, in turn, are responsible to the membership. With the growth of the organization and the widening range of its interests and activities, a constantly increasing amount of work is expected of the volunteer officers and chairmen; however, if the organization is to remain responsive to the needs and wishes of its members, this system is vital to its continuance. Each year's elections bring some new members to the Board of Managers; therefore there is a constant infusion of new personalities and new ideas coming up from within the membership.

National Office

THE nerve center of the organization is the National Office.¹ It is here that the general business of the organization is cared for, the records kept, the *National Parent-Teacher* (magazine) published, and all other publications edited and prepared for issuance. From here great quantities of materials are distributed to the state branches, and the publicity work of the organization is directed. Here the field service and other special projects are centered; the national president has an office here, and all officers and chairmen use its facilities; all accounting and financial matters are centralized here; thousands of pieces of mail come into the office annually, and a still greater number of pieces of mail, parcel post, and express go out from the office.

The president is responsible for the work of the office, and each year the Executive Committee appoints (from recommendations made by the president) the necessary employees, fixes their salaries, and defines their duties. An office director is appointed to care for the details of the work.

¹ Established in Washington, D. C., in 1897 and remaining there until 1939, when it was moved to 600 S. Michigan Blvd., Chicago, Ill.

Publications

THE National Congress of Parents and Teachers reaches more people, both within the organization and in outside agencies, by means of the publications it prepares and distributes than in any other manner. These publications are informative, authoritative, attractive, and keyed to meet the needs of all the membership. They deal with every subject that comes within the range of parent-teacher interest; although many of them, each year, are new editions of material that is timeless in its point of view, others are prepared to fit the need when special occasions arise. For example, at present much material is being prepared to help leaders adapt parent-teacher work to war conditions, with long-time values and needs perpetually in mind.

A package of publications is sent to each local association every year to aid the officers and chairmen in their work. The publication best known to the membership is the *Manual*, a guidebook covering every phase of parent-teacher work. The *National Congress Bulletin* goes monthly, by subscription, to each local president and to other workers who wish to keep themselves informed of national thinking and planning. Special pamphlets have been prepared for rural associations, high school associations, city councils, and state boards. Program planning, publicity, parent education, health, and safety—to name but a few—are subjects about which pamphlets have been written. Each year the *Proceedings* of the national convention are published; these not only contain digests of the convention addresses but are filled with information about the organization and its interests. Numerous books have been published. *Our Homes*, *Our Public Schools*, *Schools for Democracy*, and *Community Life in a Democracy* are among those issued in recent years.

National Parent-Teacher

THE *National Parent-Teacher* is the official organ of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. It is a monthly magazine of forty or more pages, appearing ten times a year. No advertising is included. It is not sold on newsstands, promoted commercially, or sup-

ported by any commercial or partisan interest. It is not published for profit. The purposes of the Magazine are to acquaint parents and the public with the latest developments in educational thought and action; to translate this information into the simplest and most usable terms, so that parents and teachers everywhere may obtain the knowledge they need to help develop their children in the soundest possible way; to inform the membership of parent-teacher progress and activities and to help them in the planning, perfecting, and carrying out of parent-teacher projects; and generally to aid in building and maintaining sound democratic principles and the citizenship that can preserve them.

Publicity

FOR effective parent-teacher work there is need of every member's understanding of the organization's program of education and child welfare; also, as successful work depends, very often, upon cooperation with other agencies in the community, it is essential that publicity be given its projects and purposes. The publicity program of the National Congress is of two sorts.

Inside publicity is information sent to the local associations and state branches within the organization. The *National Parent-Teacher* and the *National Congress Bulletin* serve as publicity channels, but much additional material is prepared on specific items of interest and distributed at frequent intervals. Inside publicity also includes instruction in publicity methods for the many publicity chairmen of local and state organizations.

Outside publicity is publicity planned to let the public know of the activities of the National Congress. Releases are sent to newspapers, press associations, and educational magazines; also, use is made of the radio on special occasions, in addition to the regular weekly program sponsored for several months each year. The parent-teacher association is news not only because of its size but because of what it is doing to bring about better opportunities of all sorts for children and youth in "home, school, church, and community."

Field Service

SINCE the very early years of its existence the Congress has maintained a field service. This has been a factor in extending the organization, in unifying its work, and in keeping the national body in touch with state and local problems and needs. It is the aim of the national body to develop leadership within the states in every way possible. The field workers meet with state boards and discuss their duties with the members; they hold group meetings and conferences with state, district, and local leaders; they conduct conferences on parent-teacher work for the general membership; they have personal conferences with educators and interested citizens who wish to understand the movement; they hold conferences and institutes on parent-teacher work in teacher education institutions, so that the students may understand the techniques, possibilities, and limitations of home-school relationships before they must encounter them. Trends of recent years show an increasing number of such institutions incorporating information about parent-teacher work into the curriculum, in addition to offering it at summer institutes to in-service teachers. The National Congress accepts this interest as a great responsibility and a great opportunity.

National Convention

THE annual convention, held in a different section of the country each spring, is the governing body of the National Congress; it elects officers, passes bylaws to govern the business administration, and adopts "findings" and "platforms" that guide the program of the organization for the following year. The convention is open to all members, though voting is confined to the officially chosen delegates. It functions not only for the conduct of business but for the information and inspiration of the membership.

National Representatives

MOST state branches hold a convention each year (a few hold them biennially), and in order to demonstrate the relationship between the national administration and the membership and to

strengthen the tie between the national and state groups, a member of the National Board of Managers is sent by the National Congress to each state convention. While there, the national representative gives inspirational addresses as desired by the state organization; presents the parent-teacher program of service from a national point of view; relates parent-teacher activities to those of other agencies in educational and social fields; makes personal and social contacts with the convention body; takes part in conferences and discussions; or serves in any other way that the state president wishes. This service also helps to unify parent-teacher activities, and it creates a close bond of friendship between state and local leaders and their national officers and chairmen.

Cooperating Agencies

THE National Congress cooperates with other national organizations and agencies in the fields of education, health, and social services when such cooperation does not conflict with the policies of the National Congress as stated in its Bylaws. With the great increase of late years in interest in social needs, child welfare, health, and other national issues, this phase of parent-teacher work has grown in importance. All organizations are coming to realize that better results can be obtained when organizations and agencies that have common interests work together for their common cause.

An outstanding example of Congress cooperation is the relation between the National Congress of Parents and Teachers and the National Education Association. These two organizations maintain a national joint committee to correlate their activities and promote their common objectives. The better mutual understanding of home and school, educators and laymen, has been greatly advanced by the work of this committee, and many improvements in modern education are closely related to its work.

As with all other projects undertaken by the National Congress on a nation-wide basis, this cooperation with the National Education Association is carried down from the national to the state, district, and local levels. In one state, for example, the state president of the

parent-teacher organization is made an ex officio member of the state education association. Similar relationships are maintained all down the line.

The National Congress is a member of the International Federation of Home and School and sends representatives to the meetings of the World Federation of Education Associations.

Cooperative relationships are maintained not only with other national and international organizations but with many Federal agencies, notably the Children's Bureau, the Office of Civilian Defense, and the U. S. Office of Education. Government agencies are making intensive use of the facilities of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers to implement the Federal program. The Congress has been brought into many government conferences originally planning projects and activities, and its participation, therefore, is by no means confined to the execution of the work planned. Definite arrangements with the Office of Civilian Defense have fully signalized that agency's recognition of the importance and helpfulness of parent-teacher co-operation in the nation's war program.

Operating Income

QUESTIONS are often asked about the financing of the work of the National Congress. Its main source of revenue is the five-cent membership dues. Its operation on this basis is made possible by the volunteer services of national officers and chairmen. Life memberships may be given by either individuals or groups to persons whose work in behalf of children merits special recognition. They are often given to persons whom a state congress wishes to honor. The money paid for them is kept in an Endowment Fund, the income of which is used by the National Congress of Parents and Teachers only for the expenses and maintenance of its headquarters, the cost of field service, and the expenses of its Executive Committee and the Board of Managers. As this fund grows, it will be possible to expand the services of the organization. Another source of revenue is the Founders Day gift. Each year the local associations honor the Founders of the organization at their meetings in February—the birthday month of the Na-

tional Congress—and a free-will birthday offering is made for the purpose of extending parent-teacher work. This offering is divided equally between the state and the national organization, but is used for the same purposes by each. These purposes are field service, organization of local units, training of leaders, contacts with educational groups, and the dissemination of knowledge that will further the aims and purposes of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers.

Projects Express the P. T. A.

By ALICE SOWERS

Importance of each committee. — Reasons for joining and attending the P.T.A. — Local monthly meetings: conduct of the business session; programs—selection of topics, speaker, medium of presentation; value of the social hour. — Standing committees and their work. — Special projects sponsored by the National Congress: Community School Lunch; Legislation; Parent Education; Radio Project; Summer Round-Up; Traffic Safety Education.—Criteria for judging the success of the P.T.A.

ONE of the stimulating things about a parent-teacher conference is the enthusiasm of each chairman and the belief of each that the success of the organization depends upon his committee. The Membership chairman says, "After all, we cannot have an organization without members." The Publicity chairman believes implicitly in the power of public information. The room representative chairman counters with, "We not only help you get the members; we get them out each month for the meetings." The Program chairman believes in the mousetrap theory: that people will beat a path to the meeting if the program is worth while. The hospitality chairman is no less firmly convinced that people are more likely to come again if they have had a good time together. The Publications chairman believes in utilizing the experiences and knowledge of other people, in making use of the resources and services of the national chairmen through their printed messages. And so it goes, throughout the long list of standing committee chairmen.

Each is correct; the success of the association does depend upon each committee. All are necessary to an effective, functioning organization; all are interdependent. The strength comes, of course, through the uniting of their services in a completely coordinated program of child welfare on a nation-wide scale.

Why Do People Join Parent-Teacher Associations?—What does the Membership committee tell parents to persuade them to join? Is it not that they will learn to be better parents, better school patrons, better citizens? That they will get acquainted with the teachers and with the parents of their children's schoolmates? That they will understand better what their children are learning at school and why they are learning it, as well as the methods employed in teaching them? That they will become informed regarding home, school, and community needs? That they will keep up to date concerning child nature?

What do the committee members tell teachers when they ask them to join? That they will get better acquainted with the parents of their pupils? That they will have an opportunity to interpret the school program to the people of the community?

Membership in a parent-teacher association can mean any of these things. It should mean all of them. In a decade of many organizations and wide and varied interests for all adults, the parent-teacher association has a unique function. Even in a community that is "over-organized"—and what community is not?—a parent-teacher association is needed if it does the things it is organized to do. In this type of organization people join but once; after that they re-enroll. They retain their membership year after year; they participate in the meetings; they serve on committees. In this organization, the members are the best publicity agents. Their friends catch their enthusiasm and come to the next meeting.

"But," says a discouraged teacher or officer who has worked long hours in the interests of a parent-teacher meeting only to find the attendance small, "the parents of our community are busy with other things; they do not seem to be interested in their children."

Parents *are* interested in their children; they love them; they are concerned about their welfare. They want to be good parents. They make every sacrifice to give their children opportunities for development, at least so far as they are able and as they understand what constitutes opportunity. Many parents, however, are bewildered. They have been told so many things they should do "for the sake of the

children." They have heard and read so much about "what is wrong with parents" and "the failures of parents." They absent themselves from public meetings at which they are afraid they may hear themselves further indicted. Most of them need the encouragement, the reassurance, that they can get out of learning that other parents have similar problems.

The Monthly Parent-Teacher Meeting

ALTHOUGH no one person or committee bears the entire responsibility or deserves the entire credit for the success of a meeting, the officers and the Program committee and the hospitality committee deserve a goodly share of it. The regular monthly meeting usually consists of the business session, the program, and the social hour.

The Business Session. In a well-conducted parent-teacher meeting the business session operates like an efficient machine. It begins on time, snaps along quickly, and operates quietly. This means careful preparation on the part of all concerned. Each reporting chairman knows what to tell and how to tell it. The presiding officer confines her remarks to the business at hand. The minutes of the previous meeting are read distinctly. They give the members a clear picture of what took place at the last meeting.

Lengthy discussions that get nowhere and heated arguments in which too few facts are presented are referred to committees for consideration, with the understanding that the committee's report will reopen the discussion to the membership at a later meeting. This prevents hasty, unconsidered action as well as long-drawn-out discussions. Parents and teachers are busy people—too busy to sit through a fifteen- to twenty-minute discussion of "who will bring what" to the covered dish supper next week.

On the other hand, all members are given an opportunity to express themselves and to vote on questions dealing with the policies, program, and activities of the association. Ordinary rules of parliamentary procedure insure fairness and courtesy to each member in all organizational procedures.

The Program. The topic for each meeting is planned to fit into the program for the year. It is selected after consideration of the needs of the members. These needs are discovered by the Membership committee, the room representatives, and the teachers, with the aid of comments and questions heard at meetings and in study groups.

What do parents want to know? What do teachers think should be discussed? Is it why the school requires homework, why the textbooks were changed, why the high school participates in music contests, why the school bus delivers children so late, why the school teaches subjects differently from the way it taught them twenty years ago, why parents should support legislation for teacher tenure and retirement? Interest in such questions as these indicates a need in the community for a "Know Your School" program. Teachers, principals, board members, superintendent, high school students, and parents should be invited to participate in the discussions.

Are parents concerned about providing for the health of their families, about maintaining high standards under rising costs or decreasing incomes, about the health of children other than their own? Do they see the need for a community-wide health program? If so, a program on health is indicated. Doctors, health officers, nurses, home demonstration agents, students, teachers, parents—all these can contribute to the program.

Do parents of high school boys and girls feel puzzled about out-of-school activities for young people, high school engagements, use of the family car, guiding young people in the use of money, securing help with home duties, the religious life of boys and girls, their attitudes toward the responsibilities of citizenship and the American way of life? Are they unsure as to what they can do in the pregraduation years to prepare their sons and daughters for leaving home? Would they like to know more about school activities? Is there a problem with regard to secret societies? Do teachers feel that the home should assume more of the responsibility for the education of their children, that children keep hours that are too late and too irregular, that they have too many outside activities? These matters can provide a theme for a whole year's series of meetings.

Programs may consist of talks, panel discussions, dramatizations, forums, or demonstrations by classes. They may be implemented by educational films, radio broadcasts, exhibits, maps, charts, pictures, or posters. All talks are planned to stimulate discussion by the audience and are carefully timed to permit this. Each meeting may be a forum. It is always best to bring opinions out into the open where both sides of the question can be presented. Talks are more effective and far-reaching if questions and disagreements are raised while the speaker is still there to clarify and amplify his earlier statements. Most speakers welcome this opportunity.

Three things are kept in mind in planning the meeting programs for the year: 1. The annual theme or topic should be based on the needs and interests of the members and of the community. 2. A fair proportion of the members should be vitally interested in the topics to be discussed. 3. Time must be allowed and necessary leadership provided to insure participation in the programs and discussion by those in attendance.

The Social Hour. This includes refreshment of mind, body, and spirit. It may include "refreshments" in the usual meaning of the term. People like to attend meetings where food is to be served, not because they are undernourished or hungry, not because they need or even want the food, but because the tea hour encourages them to linger after the meeting has adjourned, to move about and speak to other people.

Many associations have secured this friendliness, this sociability, without refreshments. Some have held the refreshment hour at the close of the meeting; others, before the meeting begins, especially when it is held in the late afternoon. The latter practice has proved successful in some places, insuring more promptness in attendance as well as more participation in the discussions.

The hospitality committee is responsible for this part of the meeting, but all members, and certainly all officers, have a part in it. They assist the committee in searching out the newcomers and the timid, as well as in helping to break up cliques, introduce people, and bring

together those who want and need to know one another. Teachers are really co-hosts and co-hostesses for all meetings held in the school building, but they are not expected to hunt out the parents of all their pupils. The hyphen in "parent-teacher" places an equal responsibility upon each.

The "visiting period" is an important part of the meeting for the parent who wants to talk with the teacher, to know some of the parents of her children's friends, or to get acquainted with people in the neighborhood. In some schools provision is made for parents to visit classrooms before the meeting.

Projects and Activities

THE parent-teacher association provides a significant educational experience for the adults of the nation. Its membership is a cross-section of American community life, and its program offers participation to all. Its influence in producing leaders is well known. Many instances could be cited of men and women who, through experience in parent-teacher work, have developed in a comparatively short time from nonparticipants in community activities to leaders in different phases of community life. Most of their preliminary experiences in leadership were gained while they served as chairmen of activity committees in the P.T.A.

The general program of a local unit is developed through a number of activities. Each member of the association may become a member of at least one committee, and each should have an opportunity to choose the committee with which he prefers to work. Only the member concerned can know just where his interests lie and where he will work best and most happily. His services may be lost entirely if he is "assigned" to some committee for the year without being consulted.

Standing Committees. Standing committees are maintained to promote the work of the association and to utilize the interests and abilities of the members. These committees may be grouped roughly as (1) organization committees and (2) project or activity committees.

Organization Committees: Organization committees include committees on membership, hospitality, room representatives, programs, publicity, publications, Founders Day, procedure and bylaws, and budget and finance. Where the membership is small, the duties of two or more committees are sometimes combined under one chairman.

Project or Activity Committees: The *National Parent-Teacher* contains a directory of the National Board, which includes the names of all national chairmen of activity committees. These committees are: Art, Audio-Visual Education, Character and Spiritual Education, Citizenship, Exceptional Child, Health and Summer Round-Up of the Children, High School Service, Home and Family Life, International Relations, Juvenile Protection, Legislation, Mental Hygiene, Music, Narcotics Education, Parent Education, Reading and Library Service, Recreation, Rural Service, Safety, School Education, and Social Hygiene.

Although a corresponding state chairman for each of these committees exists in most states, it is not considered necessary that each local association shall duplicate this list. Frequently it is thought better to appoint activity chairmen and committees after the project has been decided upon. The number of project or activity committees needed for carrying on the work of an association depends upon several factors. Some of these are the size of the membership, the needs of the community, the year-round program, and the interests of the members.

Suggestions by national chairmen and information furnished by them, as found in parent-teacher publications, are drawn upon in planning and carrying out the project or projects selected for the year-round program. Similar helps are also available from some state chairmen. In short, a wealth of information and help is at hand for carrying on the work of local associations.

Because of the breadth and depth of the parent-teacher program, the activities will sometimes overlap. This affords an opportunity for co-

operation between the overlapping committees. In the same way, the suggestions of more than one national and state chairman will be found to apply to a project. For example, a health project may call upon the resources of a number of committees, such as those on child hygiene, safety, recreation, social hygiene, narcotics education, home and family life, reading and library service, and legislation.

Special Projects of the National Congress

Nation-Wide Projects. The activities of an association grow out of the information and stimulation gained through a well-planned, well-directed program. Usually these projects are adopted as the result of observed needs in the immediate vicinity. In some instances, however, special emphasis is placed by the National Congress upon a project and all associations are urged to adopt it. Illustrations of such projects are: the Community School Lunch, Legislation, Parent Education, the Summer Round-Up of the Children, and Traffic Safety Education. These represent ideals and purposes that have concerned the whole Congress from the beginning of its work for child welfare. They are national projects because they are basic to the furtherance of the parent-teacher Objects.

Community School Lunch Project: The committee on Home and Family Life has always included among its activities the study of nutrition and the promotion of better food habits. Wartime, however, has brought about an increased national interest in nutrition. This was due largely to (1) a nutrition conference held in Washington in the spring of 1942, and (2) revealing statistics from the draft and from the health examinations of the NYA and the CCC. The National Congress responded to this quickening interest and to requests from agencies connected with the Federal Government that increased emphasis be placed on health through good nutrition. Because of its value in teaching better nutrition to the whole community, as well as its direct benefits to the children in school, the Community School Lunch Project was adopted as a major wartime activity. A score card for evaluating the program and helps for carrying it on are available from the state and national offices.

Legislation: The object of the Legislation committee is "to secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth" (National Bylaws, Article II). Part of the program is nation-wide. The activities may be grouped as follows: (1) the development and support of state legislation, based on a study of local conditions that reveals needs common to many communities, and (2) the endorsement and support of national legislation, based on a study of problems common to all states.

In order to secure necessary state laws, close cooperation is maintained with state departments of health, recreation, education, and welfare, as well as with law enforcement agencies. Stimulating efficiency in these departments and securing adequate appropriations are important phases of a state program. The proposed state legislative program is customarily presented to local associations for study and endorsement.

A study of state problems leads directly to the necessity of knowing what other states are doing in similar situations and to recognition of problems common to all states, such as narcotics regulation, pure foods, and fair trade practices. This develops the national program, which is an outgrowth of the need of the states for broader information upon which to base their work. Adequate support of Federal research is a most important phase of the national legislative program. Problems of home and family life that are common to all states, such as health (including maternal and child health services), education, and economic security—problems that can be solved best through national legislation—fall within this area. States are given an opportunity to study the proposed national legislative program and to endorse such items as they approve. Complete information about the Congress program of legislation will be found in Chapter XII, "Public Opinion and the P.T.A."

Parent Education: It was late in the nineteenth century, when traditional methods of dealing with children first began to be widely questioned, that the idea of cooperative learning about parenthood first took root. The new critical attitude led eventually to the organi-

zation of the National Congress of Mothers. Through the work of this organization and its successor, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, the whole position and outlook of children and youth have been altered. Parent-child relations have undergone sweeping revision. Changes for the better are also apparent in teacher-child and teacher-parent relationships.

Within the parent-teacher organization these results have come about through two major channels: (1) the direction of all parent-teacher activities toward improvement of parenthood in general and (2) the work of a specific project in parent education on a national scale.

This project was initiated in 1926, when the Congress received a grant for the purpose from the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial. The grant provided for the nation-wide services of a visiting specialist in parent education. No attempt was made to set up a program that must be followed by every parent-teacher unit, as it was felt that local needs should be the determining factor. Rather, the work was directed toward strengthening each state's resources and helping to coordinate the work of all organizations interested in the education of parents; winning the wholehearted cooperation of educators; and furnishing such advisory service as was needed to get local programs into good working order.

The grant and the project terminated in 1936, with a record of definite progress. Schools and educators were cooperating extensively with parent-teacher groups, not only in local projects but in study group work and parent-teacher institutes. An increasing recognition of the shared responsibility of parents and teachers was everywhere apparent, and the situation of children and youth was proportionately improved.

As far as possible, the project activities were continued under the standing committee on Parent Education and by the organization as a whole. Since every phase of parent-teacher effort is directed toward the improvement—even the professionalization—of parenthood, this was logical. Gains made under the original project have been retained, and many significant advances have been made and are still

being made in each state. The endeavor to reach ever greater heights of enlightened parenthood permeates all the programs, all the purposes, and all the ideals of the National Congress.

Radio Project: The National Radio Project is an arrangement under which a series of weekly broadcasts is presented each year over a nation-wide hookup, interpreting current problems of home, family, and community life from the parent-teacher point of view. These programs have been conducted with the cooperation of the National Broadcasting Company and have been highly successful. The most recent form of broadcast is a dramatized incident followed by an explanatory comment. The Radio Project has been a means of interesting many nonmembers in the organization. Parent-teacher listening groups as well as individual parents have found it an excellent form of parent education.

(Nation-wide interest in radio as a means of education has recently resulted in a new National Congress service to state congresses and local units—the National Radio Script Service, through which parent-teacher broadcasts of an educational nature are made available to parent-teacher groups.)

Summer Round-Up of the Children: The Summer Round-Up of the Children is an outgrowth of the all-year-round parenthood campaign of 1924-1925. It consists of a systematic plan to send first-year school children to school in good physical condition, free from remediable defects. In the beginning group examinations were held, usually in the school building, doctors contributing their services. Parents were urged to have the defects taken care of during the summer. During the past few years individual examinations by the family physician and the family dentist have been stressed. It is easier to get children to the group examinations, but the educational effect of the work is better when there is direct contact with the physician and the dentist and when the parents are present.

The Summer Round-Up has become an effective feature—perhaps the most widely known feature—of the child health activities of the National Congress. This project is invaluable as a medium of instruc-

tion in child health. In recent years the project has been broadened to stimulate a sustained program of continuous medical and dental supervision of children of all ages, including those apparently healthy.

Traffic Safety Education Project: Through a grant from the Automotive Safety Foundation, the Traffic Safety Education Project was established in 1936. The project is administered by a joint advisory committee consisting of members of the Board of Managers of the National Congress and representatives of the Automotive Safety Foundation and of the National Safety Council.

By means of a safety manual, bulletins, posters, and news letters, as well as regional conferences of state parent-teacher leaders, suggestions are given to state and local organizations.

Some of the state activities include: participation in a "family accident survey"; encouragement of safety education courses in schools and colleges; support of campaigns for safety legislation; stimulation of public opinion and action in connection with school bus safety; cooperation with school safety contests; and dissemination of safety information in state bulletins and on state convention programs.

Criteria for Success

THE success of a parent-teacher association is determined by: (1) the extent to which it affects all the homes of the school community; (2) the scope of its program and the recognition it enjoys as an effective community force for good; (3) the number of parents and teachers who attend its meetings and participate in its programs and activities; (4) the degree to which it brings about awareness of community needs and challenges community action; (5) the number and kind of resources it discovers and develops to meet community needs; (6) the results of its work as manifested by improved conditions for children and youth; (7) the degree to which local interest in child welfare grows into an interest in all children; and (8) the integrity of its program and its agreement with Congress policies.

The extent to which a parent-teacher association achieves these goals will determine its effectiveness as a force in community life. The spirit and function of the P.T.A. are fitly expressed in its projects.

Home, School, and Community in Focus

By FLORENCE C. BINGHAM

Widespread influence of the P.T.A.—Attitude of the general public.—How projects set up by local P.T.A.'s express the policies and principles of the National Congress.—Composite picture of an "average" P.T.A. member.—Significance of the type of person who becomes actively interested in P.T.A. work.—The P.T.A., an organization with a reputation built through years of unselfish service.

THE parent-teacher association may be likened to the oak tree that is the symbol of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. The roots go down deep into the community. The tree itself is nourished by the community, and its structure is determined by the sustenance it receives from its environment. If well nourished, it will become a landmark of which the community may well be proud. It will give beauty and character to the locality. Under its shelter the citizens of the community will gather for refreshment and recreation. Here the children will congregate and play in happiness and security, gaining meanwhile in health and social development.

It is sometimes difficult for a person outside the parent-teacher organization to comprehend either the scope of its activities or the depth to which it penetrates community life. Those within the organization have no such difficulty, for they are continually supplied with materials that afford them a panoramic view of the work on all levels, from national to local. The structure of the national organization is at once firm and flexible—uniform at those points where projects and

activities can be brought into national uniformity, and varied at all points where local conditions or changing circumstances demand change.

Fundamental Concepts

AT first glance it would seem an impossible task to organize any national group, and especially a national group of more than two million six hundred thousand persons of widely differing social, cultural, and economic tastes and backgrounds in such a way as to obtain this type of organizational structure. And certainly it has not been easy to do. The present organization is the result of many years of experience, adaptation, and a generous use of the trial and error method. Now that a high degree of efficiency has been reached, however, it is worth while to examine the basic framework in an attempt to explain just what the parent-teacher association is and just what it means to the American community.

It should be borne in mind that, whatever organizational procedures are employed in the carrying out of the parent-teacher program, two concepts are and remain paramount: first, the concept of the "whole child," and second, the concept of home-school-community cooperation in the care and protection of all children and youth. The latter is what we mean when we speak of bringing home, school, and community into focus, and it is the unique and indispensable contribution of the P.T.A. to community life. More than any other one thing, the presence of strong, efficient cooperative activity in any given community marks that community as one which has an active P.T.A. As an integrating force the parent-teacher organization is unsurpassed and probably unsurpassable.

And it is quite natural that this should be so. What other group is there that bases all its activities on the one thing that lies closest to the hearts and lives of all people everywhere—the welfare of children—and at the same time sets up no barriers to membership and makes no discrimination as to race, creed, profession, social status, background, or temperament? What other group offers a program of work so diversified that no member can fail to find in it an outlet for

his own particular abilities and capacities? What other group of national importance encourages member participation on so democratic a basis?

It is small wonder that the parent-teacher association strikes far down through the subsoil of community welfare. The people understand it; it is based upon what every one of them wants. They are friendly and receptive toward it; it is striving to help their children. They are unwilling not to have it as a part of their community life; they know that without it the several diversified agencies serving the cause of public welfare in general would sorely miss the uniting and forwarding power of its steadfast influence.

The "Why" of P.T.A. Influence

THE National Congress of Parents and Teachers, considered exclusively as a national organization, is like a powerful dynamo supplying its subordinate units with the light and heat they need to carry on the work. Its policies are determined by a National Board of Managers and put into effect by a National Executive Committee. No member of either body is without years of experience in education or in parent-teacher work or in both. Its work is further implemented by more than a score of national committees. Some of these are "organizational" committees, maintaining the structural strength of the organization; the remainder are "subject" committees, each of which bases its work upon some particular phase of child welfare or youth development.

A firmly interlocking pattern is evident both in organizational structure and in the carrying on of the program. The state organization is closely related to the national, as is the local organization to the state. Similarly, the work of every subject committee is closely allied to that of several other subject committees—or, as in the case of the Parent Education or the Citizenship committee, to that of *all* other subject committees. The publications, plans, and suggestions issued by the National Congress take account of this interdependence and emphasize the strength that naturally results from it. Thus, the national, state, and local programs are integrated.

Freedom at All Levels

ANOTHER outstanding characteristic of the interlocking parent-teacher pattern is its elasticity. Conformity is present on the national level, but locally there is wide freedom of choice when it comes to selecting activities. The local unit, although it looks to the state and national organizations for its basic policies and long-range purposes, is free as air to modify any suggested project or program in accordance with its own needs as these are discovered through study, observation, and research. It may choose for itself, from among the multitudinous possibilities that exist in every community, the projects it will sponsor and carry out, the values it will emphasize, the particular needs of children it will serve. For example, if the problem of juvenile delinquency is urgent in a particular community, the local P.T.A. may throw the main force of its influence toward combating its causes. If the community is disturbed by the lack of housing facilities under wartime industrial conditions, or by the need of day care for the children of working mothers, either or both of these problems may be studied and the conditions improved through P.T.A. effort. If the community is one in which a low economic level predominates, the school lunch program may form the center of effort.

The local unit is free also to cooperate with any like-minded community group so long as it does not violate any of the established policies of the Congress.

The local—and hence the national—strength of the P.T.A. is inherent not only in the group itself but in what may be called its outgrowing and indrawing influence. There is no member of any community containing a parent-teacher organization who does not feel to some extent the effect of that organization's existence. In some cases this influence is strong enough to draw the individual into membership; in others, while it does not extend so far, it has direct bearing on the building up of his attitudes toward community affairs. A man or a woman may not be a member, may not even have attended a single parent-teacher association meeting in the whole course of his life; yet if the organization is there, working actively for the care and

protection of the community's children, he and every other member of the community will feel it. The truth of this is sufficiently proved by the question so frequently heard when any community problem becomes acute: "What is the P.T.A. doing about it?" This question is heard as often from nonmembers as from those within the organization.

The Facts in the Case

FROM the point of view of this background of influence, it should be interesting to ascertain what sort of men and women make up the parent-teacher association in the average American community. At first impulse the answer would seem to be "All sorts," and in a sense it is; but when the whole pattern of the membership is studied from an adequate sample of the population it becomes apparent that there is, after all, a large degree of conformity. This conformity is of a heartening kind, for it appears chiefly in devotion to the enduring values of life and human brotherhood. This may come as a surprise to some, since there is no social or intellectual prestige connected with parent-teacher membership and leadership. One state branch, not satisfied with the general statement that the membership represents a "cross section" of the community, has made a careful study of its membership through questionnaires distributed at state and district conventions. Members of the psychology department of Stanford University assisted in formulating the questionnaire and tabulating the returns.

As the questionnaires were distributed at an afternoon meeting of the convention, few fathers or teachers were present, and the returns give only a picture of the *women* who are assuming leadership of the parent-teacher movement in that state. Slightly more than seventeen hundred persons were present at the session at which the first questionnaire was distributed in 1933. Sixteen hundred and fifty-two questionnaires were returned, which is considered a phenomenal return and is typical of the cooperative spirit of parent-teacher work. Of the sixteen hundred and fifty-two women who replied, only fifty-three skipped the age question, which must establish a record of some sort

for a woman's questionnaire. The questionnaires were not signed, and people were at liberty to omit any items on which they did not wish to give information.

Check and Double Check

A SIMILAR questionnaire was distributed at convention six years later—1939—to test the validity of the findings on the first questionnaire. The results confirmed the validity of the previous findings. However, conventions are attended largely by association leaders, and in order to ascertain whether or not the leaders were typical of the entire membership, the same questionnaire was distributed at a district meeting, which, being held near home, could be attended by a larger number of members having small children. The findings show a remarkable agreement. The table on pages 71-73 gives a summary of the findings. The study was made at a time when conditions were fairly normal—after the worst of the depression was over and before the war era.

Arrayed against a world of broken homes and selfish, pleasure-seeking people, we see an army of women whose families are united and whose homes are their main business in life. Here is a composite picture of the parent-teacher member as she emerges from the data assembled from the questionnaires. She is a woman in her thirties; has two or three children; lives in a middle-class home on a family income of about \$2,300 a year; does her own housework with occasional "outside" help; attends church; sends the children to Sunday school; votes and pays taxes. She has an education corresponding to graduation from high school or better, and she belongs to at least one other club. Although she has had professional or business training prior to her marriage, she is not gainfully employed, but devotes her time and talents to her family. She is living happily with her husband; they own their home entirely or in part and are permanent residents of the community. She is not a "glamour girl," but a wholesome, substantial sort of person that typifies the best in American ideals and makes our country what it is today. We can therefore state

with certainty and pride that the parent-teacher member represents the "average American citizen."

CALIFORNIA CONGRESS OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS

This questionnaire is for the purpose of obtaining valuable information for the California Congress concerning its delegate body. It is not to be used for any commercial purpose. DO NOT sign your name.

		State Conventions		District	Range
		I (1933)	II (1939)		
1. How long have you been a member of the P.T.A.?	Mean-6		7	5-6	1-9
2. What offices have you held?					
3. To what other organizations do you belong?	Belonging:	97%	89.9%		
Fraternal			30.2%	27.1%	
Patriotic			12.9%	11.5%	
Church		94%	78.8%	71.6%	
Character-forming groups			32.4%	29.0%	
Federated clubs			27.0%	24.2%	
Educational			20.3%	18.2%	
Political committees			7.0%	6.3%	
Others			20.8%	18.6%	
4. Do you hold or have you held office in the above?	Yes 50%		79.7%	58.1%	
5. Where were you born?					
In California		20%	25.7%	29.8%	
In the U.S.A. but not in California		74%	69.5%	65.3%	
Outside the U.S.A.		6%	4.7%	4.9%	
6. If you were not born in California, how long have you lived here?	Mean 10-19 years				
7. Number of children?	2.3		2.2	2.1	1-11
8. School age of children					
9. Have you a child in the school with which you are affiliated?			Yes 88.7%	68.9%	
10. Number of years you have attended school?					
Elementary	finished			94.0%	
*High school	finished	70%	71.5%	73.0%	
Teachers' college		19%	17.9%	22.0%	
Business school		20%	21.5%	15.8%	
University	graduated	10%	12.5%	12.0%	
Other			16.4%	8.0%	

* 95% have had some high school education.

	State Conventions		District	Range
	I (1933)	II (1939)		
11. Experience in				
Teaching		26.2%		
Nursing		7.7%		
Medicine				
Law				
Clerical		29.6%		
Sales		15.5%		
Any other field		16.2%		
12. Are you engaged in any gainful occupation now?	Yes	12.5%	19.3%	
13. What is your husband's occupation?				
Labor	37%	21.4%	41.3%	
Farmer		6.8%	6.7%	
Business	36%	46.4%	32.0%	
Profession	15%	24.0%	18.4%	
Unemployed		1.3%	1.6%	
14. What was your total income in 1938?	Mean \$2000- 2500	2000- 3000	1800- 2000	
15. What help do you employ in your home?				
None		57.5%	61.4%	
Occasional		27.4%	23.1%	
Regular part time		9.5%	11.0%	
Full time of one person		4.8%	4.2%	
Full time of two persons		.6%	.6%	
16. What is your age?	Mean 38	35-36	30-34*	
17. Are you				
Single		.6%	3.4%	
Married		96.5%	93.4%	
Divorced		.8%	1.1%	
Widowed		2.0%	2.1%	
18. Are you, your husband, and your minor children living together? If not, is the father living?	Yes	96.8%	97.3	96.7%
19. Do you own your home?				
Wholly or in part	**Yes	85%	71.3%	62.9%
20. Are you affiliated with any church?	Yes	86.6%	81.5%	

* This district has several college parent-teacher associations, which raises the average age of the members somewhat.

** If all empty blanks are counted as negative, the results would be (I) 69% (II) 68.6%.

	State Conventions		District	Range
	I (1933)	II (1939)		
21. Does your child go to Sunday school or church school?	Yes 93.5%		90.6%	
22. Did you vote in the last election?	Yes 91%	94.4%	86.5%	
23. Do you pay taxes on real estate?	Yes 98%	80.0%	73.6%	

There are unlimited opportunities for service by parent-teacher associations in this time of national crisis. Since the founding of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, almost fifty years ago, the children of the land—all the children, regardless of color, race, religion, or social station—have been the object of its concern. During the years, the organization has developed techniques and procedures in the field of child welfare that stand it in good stead during the present emergency.

The organization has an honorable record of achievement and service. During the last world war and the depression years that followed, it devoted much thought and effort to the material, educational, and psychological needs of children in a time of national crisis. It has been a bulwark of strength in resisting the attacks on public education and the organized efforts for the curtailment of educational opportunities and facilities. The purpose and unselfish motives of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers are well known. Too, the organization has gained the confidence and respect of national, state, and local officials and agencies through the cooperative relationships that have been established. As for its contribution in the present emergency, the organization is sufficiently flexible to sustain the stress of emergency demands. Its program is geared to the present crisis and is moving forward with the strength of increasing reinforcement in membership and community support.

The P.T.A.—A Unique Home Influence

By ADA HART ARLITT

Home environment as it affects a child's school progress.—Helping parents to make the most of parenthood.—The Magazine as a factor in achieving P.T.A. ideals.—Closer contacts between school and home.—Urgent need for bringing up worthy citizens.—Carrying school interests into the home, and vice versa.—Giving parents an understanding of educational processes.—Need of similar goals for home and school.

AN English philosopher has said that the problems of the modern world are so complex that they can be solved only by councils or committees working together. This is preeminently true of parent education, which is comparatively new.

Only within the past ten years has the home been accepted as the most fundamental of all educational centers and the one that has perhaps the most significant contribution to make to both childhood and maturity. The actual distribution of children's time between home and school shows the home to have the larger share. Children are in the home during the period in which emotional control, mental sets toward or away from all educational material, and general background for education are determined. The child is a home child before he enters the school, during the entire period of school education, and for some time after the school has given him his academic training. The home as a molder of personality, as a controller of the social destiny of children, is still the leading educational institution for both parents and children.

The personality patterns of adults and children grow out of both planned and unexpected experiences. The personality of each member of the family is the reflection of all the experiences, of the play of one personality upon another in the family. If parents maintain cheerful attitudes and a spirit of good will toward the school, the neighbors, the church, the community, and the Government, the children naturally and unconsciously absorb all this from the home atmosphere. The opposite, of course, is also true.

It is immediately apparent, then, that a large and significant area of parent-teacher influence is occupied by the individual home, its complex problems and its equally complex purposes. The parent-teacher association conceives of the home as the best possible laboratory for learning the ways of democracy and the responsibilities of citizenship in the larger life of the community and the nation. The fact that this has become a recognized function of the home today is due in great measure to the unceasing efforts of the parent-teacher association to secure its recognition.

Parenthood in Action

THE National Congress of Parents and Teachers represents the organized parenthood of the United States. It has always recognized the vital need of parents to learn how to make the most of parenthood in terms of sound philosophy and wholesome guidance. Family and neighborhood reading circles are projects that have been a part of the home education program. Other activities promoted are nature walks, family jaunts to places of educational or historic interest, Victory gardens, neighborhood sings, concerts, and plays. None of these activities is an end in itself; all serve a greater end—the understanding of wholesome family life and its potentialities for building character and citizenship.

The introduction of Victory gardening and other wartime activities, such as home canning projects, family participation in the Victory Book Campaign, the various salvage drives, and the drive to promote the sale of war bonds and stamps, has afforded still further opportunities for the P.T.A. to serve the home through parent education.

The housing problem and the urgent need of adequate day care for the children of working mothers have brought additional problems to be solved and additional fields of service. The strong note of dynamic democracy heard nowadays throughout the nation has long since reached the family circle, and all efforts are bent toward realizing the democratic ideal within the home, thereby developing the allied ideal of democratic responsibility from the child's earliest years.

Since none of the many phases of family life in a changing social scene has been neglected by the parent-teacher association, it is scarcely to be wondered at that even children nowadays have a totally different conception of the function of a home and the goals of cooperative family life from that entertained some years ago. The growing enlightenment of parents has necessarily communicated itself to youth, and parent-child understanding and cooperation have reached far higher ground than was ever gained before.

It should be noted here that the official magazine of the organization, the *National Parent-Teacher*, is one of the organization's principal aids in realizing these ideals. The Magazine works with the parent-teacher association on all levels, from national to local, and in all areas, from postwar planning of a democratic world to the individual family's conservation of food, clothing, and home furnishings. It brings to parents all the latest developments in education, social science, and child psychology, simplified into readable and usable form.

It deals thoroughly with the physical and material needs of children. It investigates the dangers that threaten youth both in peace and in war and sets forth the best thought as to methods of combating them. It suggests good reading and good film fare for every member of the family. It is a tireless interpreter of family and personal relationships. Its two annual study courses for parents, one emphasizing the needs of the preschool child and the other dealing with the family as a unit, supply hundreds of study groups the materials they need for building adequate parenthood for these times.

The morale developed by a rich and satisfactory home life in every American family would be invaluable to a nation at war. And there

is no cogent reason why this morale cannot be made available to our country. The parent-teacher association has assumed the responsibility of creating it wherever possible. Good results are being obtained, and there is every reason to hope that the future will see this ideal completely realized.

School and Home

DUE attention to the claims of the school has been a part of the program of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers since the organization had its first meeting as the Congress of Mothers in Washington in 1897. From that date to the present time child welfare and parent education have had a part in national, state, and local programs. Since every locality has its own situation to meet, a wide variety of set-ups has always been encouraged by the National Congress, with the single requirement that all the programs shall be based on sound educational principles.

Until the formation of parent-teacher associations the only time at which a parent was expected to visit the school was when some irate principal or teacher called him to come and discuss the faults, foibles, or educational limitations of his particular child. Since the formation of parent-teacher associations parents visit the school freely. If they fail to do so, principals and teachers combine to make them feel how welcome they are in the school buildings, which their taxes and their votes for bonds both build and support.

The need of this sort of cooperative contact has been greatly intensified by modern conditions. In the earlier history of our country, when families were larger, any child growing up in a family had educative contacts with children of other age groups—and frequently with several adults in the household besides the father and mother. This meant that a certain amount of parent education was acquired during the growing-up process, through experience with younger children in the family. At present, young people about to be married and found their own families have had no such experience and no such contact. For them, some form of preparation for parenthood is urgently needed.

Moreover, world conditions being what they are, there is far more pressure nowadays to bring up worthy citizens. Technological changes add to this pressure. To be effective, parent education must have as one of its goals the development of an understanding of economic and social changes, together with techniques for meeting the situations these changes bring about. The immense number of accomplishments and fields of learning for the parents' and children's selection makes it necessary for both to have a much wider knowledge and a much greater ability to choose what is best for their development.

Through Connecting Channels

IT is a well-known fact that children do not transfer habits from one situation to another unless the connection between the situations is made clear. In fact, a child may be one kind of person on the school-ground and quite another kind of person when he reaches home. He may be good at home and a problem child at school, or vice versa. The close connection between the home and the school brought about through full discussion of school problems by parent-teacher associations and the carrying over of this discussion into the home make for an excellent mutual transfer of desirable habits, and classes become more vital and interesting.

When his parents ask a child to repeat material learned in his classes at school and discuss this material with him, the child sees the life application of what might otherwise seem merely academic, and the material itself is retained for a far longer period. Much of what is learned in school is mastered to be used in passing examinations and is forgotten immediately afterward. If a quiz has been announced for Tuesday and is later postponed until Thursday of the same week the students will protest, largely on the ground that they "have to study for it all over again." If class work has many and varied applications to their daily living, they learn it without protest and remember it without undue effort.

The more the home makes use of the activities learned in school, the more efficient is the home. These relations hold true also for the school. The teacher who has the child demonstrate the making of

biscuits by a method learned from an excellent cook at home is helping her class to learn new methods and making both home and school life more interesting to the child.

In classrooms that do not have interests carried over into home activities, teachers often find that they have attempted to teach one thing while the children have learned another and less desirable thing. In fact, it is not at all unusual to have a child acquire a wholly *undesirable* habit while the teacher is presenting material of real value.

For example, one boy learned how to sit on the edge of his chair in geography class, looking interested, while at the same time he planned the making of a kite. His teacher was amazed at the low grades he made in tests and explained these in terms of inability to work fluently. Had the boy felt that the material presented was closely tied to his home, as geography is today, and had he felt that he could take home interesting facts to discuss with his mother and father, he would have learned geography instead of a habit of appearing interested when he was not.

Parents Too Are Helped

THROUGH contact with the school, parents have discovered many valuable facts about learning. They have found out that nothing can be taught to a child until he is mature enough to receive it. Reading, for example, cannot be attempted unless a child has attained a mental age of at least six years. To teach the names of colors before the age of five is, unless the child is exceptional, a waste of effort. Parents have learned that work with all complicated material sometimes reaches plateaus, periods in which no learning appears to be going on, but that if the child is encouraged, if he practices long enough, and if new interests are aroused in connection with this material he will inevitably pass out of the period of nonlearning and appear to be better than he was before this period occurred—always provided, of course, that he is mentally equal to the task presented.

Individual differences in speed of work, in interest, in capacity, or in reaction to discipline are now recognized as inherent. Formerly the teacher or the pupil, or both, were blamed for them. Useless and

harmful comparisons between children of the same family or between children in the same neighborhood and school grade are heard much less often today. Nowadays it is almost a platitude to say: "The only standard of improvement that should be used for a child is that of bettering his own previous record." Only close cooperation between home and school could have made this knowledge effective. No educator would claim for either home or school the complete credit for these changes; it is accepted that the two together have brought them about, each giving significant help. These and many other characteristics of learning are not only of interest to parents but helpful to parents in cooperating more closely with the school.

By what means and methods, then, does the parent-teacher association bring about the cooperation that is so greatly needed? There are many ways. The parent education study group is one of the most effective.

Study groups are organized among parents of preschool, elementary school, or high school pupils. Wherever possible, a trained leader is secured for each. The National Congress of Parents and Teachers, within whose membership are numbered thousands of professionally trained persons, has consistently stressed the need of trained leadership.

Study group techniques vary from the simple discussion method to the lecture, the symposium, the question box, and the book review. A constant succession of publications specifically planned to implement study group work is available from the National Congress.

The participation of teachers, principals, and other school personnel in all P.T.A. educational projects is eagerly sought. No effort is spared to impress upon parents the necessity of keeping always in mind the idea of genuine cooperation between school and home in behalf of the child.

The Broader Implications

IT is altogether natural, therefore, that parent-teacher associations, through full and free discussion of ideals and standards for children, have brought about a similarity in goals between the home and

the school. Before the advent of organizations that produced such close contact it was no uncommon thing to find the school upholding one standard while the home upheld quite another. The standards of one private school attended by boys were such as to produce high standards of honesty, a sense of responsibility, and initiative and independence in work and thinking. The writer was amazed to hear a boy who attended this school say to his father: "All that arithmetic work you did for me last night was wrong. You will have to do it over." Obviously, while the school attempted to teach fine ideals the family was working to break them down. The reverse is often the case, as many illustrations could be cited to show.

Only when the high ideals taught by each institution are accepted by both can efficient character training become a part of any education, but to a democracy it is a matter of life and death. Democracy is not inherited. Only the ideals of democracy are passed down from father to son. To each generation falls the task of putting these ideals into practice. A single election may change and has changed a free form of government into a dictatorship. The character of a people must be firm enough to stand adversity if a nation is not to fall a prey to propaganda for a panacea and to promises that cannot be kept by any man. Parent-teacher associations, with their democratic procedures and high ideals, may go far to aid this process of building a strong democracy.

That parent-teacher associations have produced better understanding of children, of parent-teacher relations, and of the relations between the parents themselves is too well known to need supporting evidence. It has been said that parent education is a comparatively recent development. Education of any kind spreads slowly, much after the fashion of a stone tossed into a pond. The first rings appear rapidly, but they progress more and more slowly as they move toward the outer edges of the pond. New educational movements attract a group, but the influence of this group, as of the movement itself, tends to progress slowly. Notwithstanding this undeniable fact, the advances made by the parent-teacher association in integrating school life with family life and with the activities of the community have been significant.

The need for this integration does not lessen; on the contrary, it is continually growing and spreading. The responsibility of those dedicated to the parent-teacher ideal expands accordingly. Unquestionably, if the leadership is poor there may be undesirable effects from the activities of parent-teacher associations. However, these undesirable effects are so far outweighed by desirable ones that few, if any, of the communities that have had parent-teacher associations functioning for any length of time would be willing ever again to do without them. Parent-teacher work is quiet and unobtrusive, but it is steadfast and its influence is strong. If it were possible to find an American community that has never been influenced in any way by the parent-teacher association and to set it for comparison beside a community in which the P.T.A. has been active even for so short a period as one year, the difference would be startling. And not the least part of that difference would lie in the quality of family life in the two communities, as demonstrated by the attitudes of the family's growing boys and girls.

The P.T.A.—Interpreter of Education

By CHARL ORMOND WILLIAMS

Five unique characteristics of the P.T.A. — The P.T.A. as interpreter between home and school. — The P.T.A. as champion of the principles of universal free education. — Books published by the National Congress. — Institutes on Professional Relations. — Examples of effective P.T.A. activity. — Coordinating all activities in behalf of the child. — Making known the findings of experts. Community influences, good and bad, and what the P.T.A. can do about them.

THROUGH dark night, under skies that may rain fire and over seas that may spew death, the ship that sails in convoy formation is forever alert to integration. The "John Paul Jones" is off the course? The "City of New York" is lagging? The "Pinnacle" has lost steam? There will be shrill calls of "Ahoy-there!"—signals, queries that will bring understanding and help.

In no lesser degree do the seaworthy ships that are the forces of our society need mutual understanding and help as they enter the dark shadows that becloud this middle twentieth century. Integration of our efforts—social, educational, and economic—is imperative if civilization is to survive.

The purpose of the parent-teacher association is essentially one of integration. The organization sprang in the beginning from a need of understanding between two great social and educational forces, the home and the school. Its primary object, as given in the parent-teacher *Creed*, is "to interest all people in all children and to link in common purpose the home, the school, and all other educative forces

in the life of the child, to work for his highest good."

The function of the parent-teacher association in this work is unique because of at least five characteristics that set it apart from all other organizations:

1. In distribution of membership, it is as democratic as the public schools—it recognizes no class, property, political tenet, or creed.
2. In geography of membership, it extends from densely populated metropolitan sections to the most remote rural communities—from one end of the land to the other.
3. It is the only organization, so far as is known, in which teachers have joint partnership with parents, shown specifically by the name of the organization.
4. It is the only such organization of both parents and teachers in which the main object of service is the child, this addition forming a kind of inclusive triangle.
5. It is the only large national organization of lay men and women which throughout the country regularly holds its meetings in the schools.

Democracy of the Association. If in our public schools are joined "all the children of all the people," in the parent-teacher association are joined the parents of these children. Of all our institutions, the public school best typifies the American ideal of equality of opportunity. Of all organizations, the parent-teacher association perhaps comes nearest to being a cross section of adult America. In ideals, and to a great extent in practice, it is "a great democracy in which all points of difference, social, racial, religious, and economic, are lost to sight in the united effort to reach a common goal, the welfare of all the children of every state in the Union."¹

Geography of Membership. The two million six hundred thousand members of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers are grouped into 28,000 local units, scattered throughout every state in the Union, the District of Columbia, and the Territory of Hawaii. Dwelling in the metropolitan areas around the Great Lakes and in the sparse pine sections above the Gulf, in the "gold lands" of the Pacific Coast and in the granite hills of New England, these members bring to-

¹ *Parents and Teachers*, edited by Martha Sprague Mason. National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1928. P. 134.

gether the far reaches of public interest as well as of geographical space in our country.

χ *A Congress of Parents and Teachers.* In the opinion of leaders of the movement the greatest achievement of the National Congress of Mothers was its development into a National Congress of Parents and Teachers. This change was completed in 1924, twenty-seven years after its founding. With that gesture the Congress became a *mutual* organization, with an opportunity to unify the purposes and aims of the home and the school. Recognition of its mutually beneficial service enjoyed a rapid spread, and at present its worth is understood by educators throughout the nation. It is not too much to hope that in a few years there will be no school, from the smallest rural institution to the greatest metropolitan set-up, in which its help is not welcomed and put to use; that there will be no superintendent, no teacher, no principal who does not understand what it has to offer; that there will be no American parent who does not understand what it has to offer; and that there will be no American child who does not profit by its assistance.

The Inclusive Triangle. There are many organizations in the land whose main object is service to the child. There are organizations of teachers; every professional organization of teachers might be said to fall under the category of child or youth welfare groups. There are organizations of parents; every mothers' club might be included here. In almost any community the mothers of children and the teachers of these same children will find themselves joined in social or civic clubs. But the parent-teacher association alone is that inclusive triangular arrangement of parents and teachers at the base, with all activities pointing toward the apex, the child who is their mutual ward.

And It Meets in the School. Throughout the country many meetings of adults are held in the school buildings during any given year. In certain localities a number of clubs may hold their meetings in the school. But the National Congress of Parents and Teachers is the only

large national organization of lay men and women the multitudinous units of which throughout the country *regularly* hold their meetings in the school buildings. This meeting place is important, for here parents can come to know the atmosphere that surrounds their children most of their waking time: the beauty or lack of beauty of building and grounds; the equipment in use in the classrooms; the "school personalities" of those who direct the learning experience of their children from day to day.

The P.T.A. as Interpreter

IN its unique integration work in relation to the school the parent-teacher association has three obligations: to understand, to speak, to act. As a promoter of understanding, it encourages mutual knowledge of home and school on the part of parents and teachers, and, further, it encourages dissemination of that knowledge throughout the community.

Understanding on the Part of the Teacher. To the well-educated, socially-minded teacher of today each child is a challenge. Modern education realizes that the teacher cannot meet that challenge unless he knows the child and that he cannot know the child unless he knows the home. The parent-teacher association encourages the teacher's consideration and study of the home on a friendly, social basis as well as on a professional basis. In the association work the teacher has further opportunities for broadening his perspective on the child and for rendering intelligent service to the entire community.

Understanding on the Part of Parents. The school of the past had relatively little in common with the school of today. A changing world has, in all walks of life, thrust new knowledge, new methods, and new procedures upon its population. Teaching, in its broadened scope, its shift of subject matter, and its employment of new techniques, but accompanies the trend of the times.

One of the most interesting and authoritative statements of the goals of modern education is that of the Educational Policies Com-

mission of the National Education Association. According to its report, educational objectives center in: (1) the possibilities of the individual himself; (2) his relationships to others in home and community; (3) his role in the creation and utilization of wealth; and (4) his socio-civic activities.

Effect of Mutual Understanding. The drive toward these objectives has brought, as a matter of course, an enrichment of the old, narrow curriculum of the pioneer period and an enlargement of the responsibilities of the schools. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, our schools have continually grown to accommodate more persons and more interests, extending their work up to adult levels, down to preschool ages, and out into an expanding area of vocational education, economic studies, and social knowledge. Yet the task of the public school still stretches beyond our known horizons.

Parents brought up in the old school have experienced difficulty in understanding the new. As an earlier writer points out: "Parents reared in academic circles cannot understand why Latin and Greek are no longer required subjects, whereas those with a slight educational background fail to see why their sons and daughters, about to go into business life, are compelled to spend years on cultural subjects. Others, who long to see their children occupy a better social position than their own, suspect that such innovations as the junior high school are 'designed to make a race of factory workers.'"²

Equally difficult for parents to understand have been the new methods of procedure. Many parents—accustomed as they have been to the tradition of "lickin'" as motive, method, and discipline—find the current diversity of procedures and techniques both confusing and irritating. Teachers themselves have frequently found their methods unsatisfactory. As Stuart A. Courtis phrases it: "The truth is that no one yet knows how to teach efficiently. We have made progress, we are improving, but the fundamental knowledge about how children grow and learn has not yet been discovered. We know that subject matter determines what is learned and method determines at-

² *Parents and Teachers*, p. 156.

titudes and ideals but we do not yet know how to adjust subject matter and method to individual needs so that each child learns efficiently just what we think is good for him. For each individual is unique and there is no one best method which fits universally into every situation.”³ Thus teachers find themselves in need of alertness and intelligence through every moment of the day, as, keeping in mind all their knowledge on the subject, they shift from method to method, adjusting procedures to situations and personalities.

To understand the school, parents should comprehend the influence of changing social conditions on the needs of the school. School equipment, personnel, and rules and regulations for personnel are not the same and should not be the same as they were in the school life of the parents—any more than the cramped knowledge encompassed by the Three R’s is adequate for a life in which electric eyes, steam pressure, and sound waves are accepted without wonder.

The Public School, the Cornerstone of Democracy. The spirit of the American frontier, with its vital concept of democratic life, encouraged education that was universal and free, supported and controlled by the public, open alike to all, compulsory, and nonsectarian. Today vigilance is no less necessary for continuation of these principles than it was when the battle raged for their acceptance.

Recognizing the public school as the agency on which democratic society rests, the Committee on School Education of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers from its very beginning has centered its work around the study of the school as a great social and political institution belonging to the people. The committee continuously seeks to stimulate interest in and cooperative action for the improvement of schools and the maintenance of the principles on which American education is founded.

A study of early leaflets prepared by the committee reveals such subjects for consideration as “Know Your Schools,” “Better Teachers,” “School Administration and Organization,” “School Buildings and

³ *Schools for Democracy*, compiled and edited by Charl Ormond Williams and Frank W. Hubbard. National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1939.

Equipment," and "The Nation's Share in Equal Educational Opportunity." Every leaflet urged upon the membership of this far-flung organization the need for state equalization funds as well as for Federal aid to education.

However, in the past ten years the problems have increased with such momentum that small leaflets have not been adequate. Therefore, in 1934, in recognition of the need of definite information about school aims and achievements, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, through its chairman of School Education, called upon the knowledge and experience of a score of experts, with the result that a 206-page volume was published under the title *Our Public Schools*. The study and use of the 30,000 copies sold throughout the country beyond doubt played a significant part in the preparation of leaders of this great organization to know, to speak, and to act boldly in behalf of public education in the United States.

In 1939, in response to the great concern over the threat to democracy throughout the world, the help of experts was again sought through the chairman of School Education, and *Schools for Democracy* was published. As a story of the schools—past, present, and future—their purpose, administration, organization, and support—this book is in widespread demand.

Parents' Stake in Professionalizing Teaching. The earliest leaflets, as well as each succeeding publication, emphasize better teachers and better teaching as the most important factor in any school. Chapters IV and V in *Schools for Democracy*—"Teaching: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," by Stuart A. Courtis, and "Making Teaching a Profession," by Herman L. Donovan—should inspire every thoughtful parent to strive to maintain in the schools a superior group of teachers. No group in the country has a greater stake in the professionalization of teaching than have parents.

Cooperation of state branches of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers has been sought in Institutes on Professional Relations, which have been held, since 1938, in institutions for teacher education in every section of the country. Besides their great value as a force

in raising the standards of the profession, these institutes have the added advantage and worth of being built on a concept of democratic cooperation. By promotion of these institutes, and participation in their work, the parent-teacher groups are working jointly with four other important educational agencies: the teacher education institutions of the country, the state education associations, the state departments of education, and the National Education Association.

The Authoritative Lay Spokesman

HAVING come to mutual understanding largely by means of the parent-teacher association, parents and teachers will find their outlet of activities centered primarily in a dissemination of this understanding. As the authoritative lay spokesman for the schools, the association should be alert to publicity channels. Newspapers, periodicals of all kinds, radio, stage, and screen all offer opportunities to the wide-awake group of parents and teachers. But of all channels the best is an informed membership that can speak with knowledge in its daily contacts with the community, making clear to the public the value of education, its tools, and its skilled administration.

The board of education is the official lay body that speaks for and to the schools; but as a body both closer to the community and closer to the schools, with an inclusive membership and firm principles that admit of no special-interest pressure or gossip-motivated action, the parent-teacher association has a very special place in the structure of our society. It is needed by the home, the school, and the community alike. The home needs an agency to speak for the betterment of the school at all times, so that the school may truly augment the good work of the home. The school, to serve the child best, needs an agency to speak with knowledge and understanding of its work and its potentialities. The community needs an organization with such a reputation for integrity, courage, fairness, and justice—such a fine type of leadership—a record so high and unassailable—that its cry of “Wolf” will bring immediate action.

In many instances the voice of the parent-teacher group has been the voice that led to progress. This leadership was particularly ap-

parent in the great depression of the '30's. In an educational crisis in North Carolina, 5,000 aroused parents in organized caravans from every corner of the state converged upon the state legislature, with the result that substantial appropriations were made to the cause of education. In the same era, the Tennessee Congress of Parents and Teachers adopted the eight-point program of the Tennessee Education Association and was a powerful factor, through its study, discussion, and activity, in the passage of needed legislation.

In a western state an amendment to the state constitution designed to increase the tax millage of the state for education was before the public for consideration. The large and active state congress of parents and teachers, working shoulder to shoulder with the state education association, organized its forces in every village and hamlet of that state, with the result that the amendment won by an overwhelming majority. This account could be multiplied many times. In a significantly large number of states educators would never think of launching activities for educational progress without the full understanding and cooperation of the state congress of parents and teachers.

A Coordinator of Activities

THERE is yet another service of the parent-teacher association that adds to its unique function as an integrator of social and educational forces. Not only does it promote understanding and serve as an authoritative lay spokesman, but it coordinates all activities in behalf of the child. For an integrated personality, the child should have integration of his various "lives": his home life, his school life, his religious life, and his community life. As Angelo Patri has stated: "When parents have one set of ideals and teachers another, and the child finds himself struggling with still a third set in his life outside, the confusion of ideals and standards and motives stuns him, he wavers toward one and then another, never sure, never safe. And if a child is to grow, he must be both sure and safe in his mind as to where he is going and why he is going and how he is to get there."⁴ If the parent-teacher association could reach every home and every school and with its co-

⁴ *Parents and Teachers*, p. 188.

operative influence standardize values and eliminate conflicting efforts, the cooperative job of educating the children would be greatly simplified.

The parent-teacher organization, through its very existence and through the child's familiarity with its work as he sees it influence the daily life of his parents, augments in a highly significant manner the socializing power of the school. It furnishes the child with an intimately known and easily understood pattern of cooperative action and acquaints him in advance with the sort of large-scale group endeavor toward which the smaller cooperative projects of the school are steadily leading him. In a democracy, no human skill is more important than the ability to work successfully with others. The parent-teacher organization, with its flexible program of work and its rigidly maintained ethical principles, affords a constant example of the best possible sort. Through its influence the child has an opportunity to absorb the principles and acquire the attitudes necessary to democratic cooperation.

Bridging the Gap between Knowledge and Practice. The findings of experts, particularly in hygiene and child development, common knowledge in the school though not always such common practice, may through the parent-teacher association be brought within reach of the men and women who most need the scientific knowledge in their task of parenthood. In both home and school there has existed a gulf between our knowledge of the nature and needs of the child and our practice in his care and training. The program of the parent-teacher association is designed to organize, interpret, and apply what has been or is being discovered regarding sound physical, intellectual, social, and moral development. The charge is often brought against democracy that it does not appreciate and utilize the services of experts. However, the parent-teacher association has from the beginning endeavored to overcome this weakness and has consistently called in expert help in the fields of education, health, and welfare.

Due recognition of what is sound and acceptable in the newer theories of education is a definite part of one important parent-teacher

function—keeping the schools free to teach the truth. The search for truth has never led mankind down a straight, smooth highway. Mistakes are inevitable, but they should not be allowed to clog the wheels of progress. The parent-teacher association has an important task to do in educating public opinion toward fair-minded acceptance of any new educational method or practice that has proved worth while.

It is not always realized how extensive and intensive a program of preparation of the public mind is involved in the launching of any new project, great or small. The parent-teacher organization, however, does realize this, for it was originally founded upon an idea new at the time—the concept of protection of the whole child—and has won its way through countless struggles as it has sought to gain recognition for one desirable innovation after another through the years. Its experience in this respect has been put to work, again and again, for the benefit of our schools. Many a practical improvement has been introduced through its direct influence, to the immeasurable benefit of the schools and the children.

It is greatly to the credit of the parent-teacher association that this influence has never been exerted without careful preliminary study of all the implications of the project under consideration. The approach to all parent-teacher planning is study, and the basis of all parent-teacher action is knowledge.

Safeguarding the Child in the Community. Knowledge is a powerful weapon, as has been pointed out with regard to the home and the school. It is no less powerful with regard to agencies outside these two important ones in the life of the child. Is the child in a good community? What do you, as the parent or teacher of the child, know about his temptations as regards gambling, taverns, slot machines, libraries circulating undesirable books, and other malevolent factors? What do you know about the corner grocery, the candy store, the ice-cream store, the iceman, the delivery boy, the milkman, and the mailman, as beneficial or harmful influences?

Having discovered that some of the community influences are injurious, parents have two courses open to them. They may move away.

That is possible at times if the location is a large city, or even a medium-sized city, and if the work of the father or the mother will not be affected by the change of locality. In the majority of cases, however, there is only one way open, and that is through definite and concrete work to better the conditions. The movies, the radio, the library, and other important educational agencies, as well as the "great school of the street," are subjects that should receive the uplifting influence of the parent-teacher association.

The Parent-Teacher Association, a Valuable Asset to Every School. From the beginning, the parent-teacher association has stood firmly upon the principle that the job of educating the youth of any community is a cooperative job in which the school, the home, the church, and the community share. The institution most vitally concerned in the welfare of the child is the home. To the school it surrenders for the school day its most precious possession, the child. The school, on the other hand, is handicapped in point of time, for only the more fortunate cities can claim more than 12 per cent of a child's time away from diverting and often conflicting interests.¹ Nothing save integration of all social and educational forces can make the time spent in school of the greatest possible value, can enrich the time spent in the home, and can safeguard the time spent away from the influence of either home or school. Fortunate are both home and school in the community where an active, alert parent-teacher association gives unity, coherence, and emphasis to the efforts of all educative agencies.

The P.T.A. Serves the Community

By IVAN A. BOOKER

Basic needs in community improvement.—Role and achievements of the P.T.A. in this work.—Typical community projects of the P.T.A. in the fields of public health, safety, civic beauty, extended public services, cultural and recreational facilities.—Suggested procedures.—Value of the P.T.A. as a representative, democratic organization.—Support of state and Federal action for community betterment.

THE legendary and tragic effort of the Hamelin city fathers toward community improvement calls forth from this generation an indulgent smile of amiable contempt. "What a simple problem they had," we confidently assert, "and how stupidly they acted!" They should have been more foresighted than to remove a bad situation by introducing a worse. They should have known that to get rid of the rats someone always *must pay the piper!* Foolish bunglers, they; shrewd managers, we.

Or are we, after all, so far removed from Hamelin town? When, actually or figuratively, we are plagued with rats, do we not often wait for the chance arrival of an obliging Pied Piper? Do we not still take desperate chances with the lives of boys and girls for the sake of "a thousand guilders"? Do we not wait all too frequently for the city council to deal with situations in which every citizen could and should *dispose of a rat or two?* The analogy, alas, is very uncomfortably accurate.

Community Improvement, a Cooperative Task

IMPERFECT as our knowledge is with respect to techniques of community improvement, several fundamental principles have been amply demonstrated. *First*, the matter of building an ideal community is a continuous process—not a rush job, quickly accomplished. *Second*, community betterment is a task large enough and important enough to challenge the best efforts of every person. *Third*, effective use should be made of all the natural resources of the community as well as of its human resources. *Fourth*, problems usually must be attacked before there is unanimous agreement on a plan of action. *Fifth*, community endeavor must be well directed—for there can be unity of purpose in witch hunts and lynching bees as well as in wholesome pursuits. And finally, the amount of improvement possible in a given community during a given period of time is determined in large measure by the number of persons who recognize and assume their fair share of the responsibility and especially *by the effectiveness of their cooperation* in working for common ends. It is here that the significance of the parent-teacher association in community improvement becomes apparent—in cultivating widespread interest in community welfare and general awareness of civic responsibility; and in providing a channel for intelligent, effective cooperation.

There are limits, of course, to what a parent-teacher association can or should do. Just as community betterment demands the best effort of all individuals, it must have, as well, the coordinated efforts of all organizations—civic, religious, fraternal, commercial, political, cultural, and social. It is not here proposed that an alert P.T.A. is a “royal road” leading from Slumville to Zenith City, or that any community with a good P.T.A. has found a magic panacea for its ills. Such claims would be not only presumptuous but patently absurd. The parent-teacher association is only one in the “family” of community organizations, all of which must make their respective contributions to the common good.

Against the background of such obvious limitations, however, the strategic role of the P.T.A. in community improvement is clearly

visible. The P.T.A. does command certain vantage points, certain unique opportunities and responsibilities for community betterment. These should be more widely recognized and more fully used.

The Stake of the P.T.A. in Community Improvement

NOT the least significant for effective work in community development is the vital interest that parent-teacher workers have in community betterment. Theirs is an interest not in boosting the price of real estate, or in increasing the volume of local business, or in winning political favor, but in creating a wholesome community in which to rear children. This is not to say that other organizations typically are interested in community welfare only because of unworthy or selfish motives; it is only to say that no organization has a more vital or a less selfish stake in community betterment than that one whose members band themselves together to promote the welfare of every child everywhere, in home, school, *and community*.

This central, pervading objective in parent-teacher work places the P.T.A. inescapably in the front rank in every campaign for a better community. Unless an association works aggressively and efficiently for community improvement, it is negligent in performing the work it is pledged to do. If it seeks to promote child welfare without due regard for community problems and needs, its efforts are foredoomed to mediocrity, if not to actual failure.

Appropriate Areas of P.T.A. Concern

A PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION properly is interested in every movement and proposal that gives reasonable promise of making the community a more wholesome one for growing boys and girls. For that reason virtually all phases of community betterment represent legitimate areas of parent-teacher interest. It is hard to identify any project which, if it represents a definite forward step in community improvement, does not also affect the lives of boys and girls. "What about street improvements?" someone may ask, or "What about the regulation of billboard advertising? Should a P.T.A. take a hand in such matters?" Obviously, the answer is "Yes," if the

advantage sought will materially *benefit the children* of the community.

Because the proper field of P.T.A. interest in community problems is very broad, parent-teacher associations are forced continually to choose among the many projects they might well undertake. Whether to work for the extension of sidewalks, for the inauguration of a system of summer playgrounds, or for a change in the operating policy of the local theater or radio station is the kind of practical choice every P.T.A. must repeatedly make. With so much to be done, the association must try to select a few urgent problems and work intensively, for the time being, on their solution. Otherwise its energies are dissipated in half-hearted and sporadic "busy work." To avoid this pitfall the effective P.T.A. asks the question: What can we do this year (or this month, or tonight) that will do most to improve our community as a place for boys and girls? Then, when this question has been faced, a program in keeping with the association's energies and resources is carefully outlined and vigorously pursued.

Among the areas of community improvement that often are the concern of parent-teacher groups, the following may be listed: (1) public health problems; (2) safety and security; (3) cleanliness and beauty; (4) orderliness; (5) adequacy of public services; and (6) provision of suitable cultural and recreational opportunities.

Public Health Problems. Typical of the specific health measures that are being successfully promoted by parent-teacher associations is the Summer Round-Up, which has achieved remarkable nationwide results as a specific P.T.A. project. "Oh, but that is not community improvement," someone protests, "That is merely a persuasive educational effort to get people to do what they should do anyway." Precisely. Yet, according to the point of view defended here, that is community improvement at its best—it is a first step toward the all-out approach, in which every citizen (as was suggested earlier) "disposes of a rat or two."

Other important health battles that frequently are won by parent-teacher groups, with or without the help of other organizations, are

improvements in sanitation; provision or extension of hospital facilities; introduction of a program of immunization against such diseases as smallpox, diphtheria, and typhoid fever; prevention and treatment of tuberculosis; provision or extension of other services in health clinics; regulation of working conditions; and—another P.T.A. favorite—provision of an adequate school lunch program.

Safety and Security. As illustrative of P.T.A. interest in the promotion of safety and security may be cited efforts to obtain traffic lights, stop signs, and other devices to promote traffic safety; elimination of hazards in school buildings and on school playgrounds; and efforts to obtain adequate lighting and sufficient fire and police protection for all.

Particularly important in this area is the influence of some forward-looking associations in shifting the problem of juvenile delinquency, in their respective communities, from the common channels of criminal procedure to a program chiefly concerned with the redirection and rehabilitation of young offenders—that is, prevention rather than cure.

Currently, much attention is being given in parent-teacher associations to civilian defense. This involves planning for the protection of children in an emergency, provision of the special facilities that may be essential to comfort and safety, and especially selection and training of many persons for the performance of various types of emergency work.

Cleanliness and Beauty. Clean-up and paint-up campaigns, tree-planting activities, landscaping of parks and other public grounds, and efforts in behalf of suitable zoning regulations are examples of P.T.A. endeavor for clean and attractive communities. Billboard regulation, establishment of roadside parks, and stimulation of interest in home gardens are related problems sometimes successfully attacked.

Orderliness. Although the work of parent-teacher groups in promoting orderliness and efficiency in community living is less spectacu-

lar than in many of the projects mentioned above, it may be quite as important. What is meant here is the continuous educative effort of the P.T.A. to encourage long-time community planning, honesty and efficiency in public office, an equitable and adequate system of taxation, law observance, and justice for all in court procedure.

Adequacy of Public Services. P.T.A. endeavor to obtain adequate public services hardly needs to be illustrated, since it may involve any service that the community provides at public expense or under a franchise agreement. Many of the projects already mentioned could be classified here; for example, the extension of public health services or of police protection. But, in addition, it may involve cooperative work to extend the community's system of improved roads, sidewalks, sewers, lights, water supply, bus service, telephone service, mail delivery service, parks, playgrounds, libraries, and schools.

Provision of Cultural and Recreational Facilities. Not only the *extension* of parks, playgrounds, libraries, and schools, but sometimes the *provision* of these and other needed cultural and recreational facilities and services, should have "priority" in P.T.A. affairs. Foremost among such problems, of course, is an unrelenting drive to assure adequate school facilities, retention of a competent school staff, and a program of school services sufficiently varied, broad, and interesting to meet the needs of the children, the adolescents, and the adults in the community. Like any other power, the power of the organization so to influence the community will increase if steadily and effectively exercised. Potentially it is enormous and should be developed to the full.

In addition, the P.T.A. must necessarily be concerned with many activities and proposals that pertain directly to the cultural and recreational life of the community. From time to time it must evaluate and either endorse or discourage certain enterprises or plans having to do with music, art, drama, dancing, club work, forums, lectures, private schools, sports, playground programs, fairs, exhibits, museums, and numerous other interests. Likewise, the P.T.A. should be, and

often is, a constructive force in moulding public opinion and developing community policy with respect to the practices of local newspapers, radio stations, and theatres.

Appropriate P.T.A. Procedures in Community Building

IN addition to selecting one specific problem for intensive work—or at most a very few—the parent-teacher association needs to develop a program of action in keeping with the nature of the organization itself. In this connection, perhaps a few “Don’ts” may prove helpful:

1. Don’t mistake the P.T.A. for a civic club or a citizens’ association. Keep children’s interests central in every undertaking.

2. Don’t align the P.T.A. with one political party or with any organization or faction where the collaboration will either stir up race or class dissension or promote intolerance and unfortunate prejudices. Usually it is better to forego the advantage sought than to gain it through such alliances.

3. Don’t allow the P.T.A. to be used as the tool of other organizations, to put across *their* plans. Cooperation implies collaboration in the planning as well as in the process of promotion. The P.T.A. has no monopoly on wisdom, no superior insight into what is most needed in the community. But merely to follow blindly the instruction of some other group is to admit that your P.T.A. is a spineless, ineffective organization.

4. Don’t resort to “wire pulling,” “horse trading,” “bulldozing,” and other unseemly procedures that may bring upon the P.T.A. a volley of just criticism. There is no sacrifice of aggressiveness because of this safeguard, and from it arise no causes for regret.

If these precautions are taken, few positive directions need be given. The specific steps that should be taken will vary widely from one situation to another. Sometimes the P.T.A. can do the necessary job alone; often it must enlist the interest and help of other groups, planning and working with them in genuine cooperation. Sometimes the chief need is for investigation and conference by committees or officers of the P.T.A.; more often there is need for general group discussion and an every-member program of publicity and interpretation. The activities in any given case will be determined by what is necessary to accomplish the desired result—by the persons or agen-

cies that have the power to make or prevent the proposed improvement; by the source and character of the opposition; and by the nature of any obstacles that exist.

Whether the P.T.A. leads and coordinates the necessary work or whether a coordinating council or other agency assumes that responsibility is relatively unimportant. The vital consideration is effective cooperation, whether in leading or in following, in matters affecting child welfare.

The Unifying Influence of the P.T.A.

TO the difficult task that has been outlined here the parent-teacher organization brings one unique weapon. It is typically the most representative and the most democratic organization the community has. Many organizations tend to be divisive in their influence, separating the populace into carefully restricted classes and special interest groups. The parent-teacher association, on the contrary, knows no boundaries of social class, religious creed, party affiliation, or occupation. It is the common meeting ground where men and women of all classes, parties, and creeds lay aside their special interests for the common goal of better advantages for tomorrow's citizens. Even many people who have no children to be immediately affected join wholeheartedly in the parent-teacher movement. This is an important advantage—one that must not be imperiled by alignments that involve the traditional clash of political parties or other noncompatible groups.

Toward a Better Tomorrow

CERTAIN types of community improvement can be brought about only by state or Federal action. Adequate state school support and the control of child labor are examples with which everyone is familiar. The work of the national and the state parent-teacher congresses on behalf of such programs as these should not be lightly valued. This, too, is part of the P.T.A. program for community improvement. It is mentioned here only in passing, because, by and large, parent-teacher workers are most directly concerned with the problems they must help to solve for their own respective communities.

Community improvement, a process in which each achievement is but the stepping stone to further progress, is the joint responsibility of all persons, organizations, and agencies. Each citizen, therefore, and all community organizations should recognize and assume their own responsibilities for community betterment. The parent-teacher association has a special obligation in this field, because a better community environment for children is one of the central objectives justifying its existence. The P.T.A. may properly work for any and all forms of community improvement, provided only that its efforts are prompted by the urgency of *children's* needs. Cooperation between the P.T.A. and other community organizations is virtually necessary; it is highly commendable so long as the integrity of the P.T.A. is maintained. Since the parent-teacher organization is broadly representative, since it tends to unite rather than to divide, it is potentially one of the most influential groups in community development.

Its responsibility is correspondingly great and should be seriously recognized.

A Rural Point of View

By WM. MCKINLEY ROBINSON

Differences between urban and rural P.T.A.'s. — Additional needs of the rural P.T.A. — Homogeneous membership in country areas. — Integrating factors of rural neighborhoods. — Adapting the structure and procedures of the organization to the needs of the group. — Assistance from the county or district council. — Participation of the rural teacher in P.T.A. work. — School projects that interest the entire community. — Avoidance of entangling alliances.

AS the rural school stands in a somewhat different relationship to the community from that of the urban school, so does the rural parent-teacher association stand in a somewhat different relationship to the community from that of the urban association. Probably the most distinguishing characteristic of the rural association is the fact that it is truly a community organization. In the urban center the home, church, and school are buttressed by many other agents or agencies concerned primarily or in part with the well-being of children. The services of some few of these agencies, though "urban-officered, urban-centered, and urban-located," may be available to rural children and youth, but so infrequently are they used that their influence remains negligible, and such contacts as may be had are usually initiated through the school or the P.T.A. In a very real sense, though seldom so labeled, the rural association serves as a community council. The home, the church, the school, and the P.T.A. that implements their common efforts play a peculiarly dominant role in the rural community.

In attendance at the meetings and participating actively in the rural association's projects will usually be found a group that is

representative of the entire community. Proportionally more men, more persons who are neither teachers nor parents of children in school, more young people, and far more children are to be found there. Attendance of children, except for short periods or upon rare occasions, is specifically discouraged in urban associations. But in rural areas there is seldom anyone available with whom to leave the children, particularly those in the more isolated homes; and so the rural family attends the meetings as a unit and participates in many of the association activities as a unit. To those who regularly attend rural religious and social gatherings the presence of children and babies, even though they become more or less restless and noisy, is less disturbing than it is to those accustomed to the sedate and dignified atmosphere of similar urban gatherings.

Supervision of the children in another room of the school building or a nearby home is to be desired. Where this is not feasible, giving the children some responsibility in the program will help to relieve their weariness and restlessness. The participation of children should be planned for the educative rather than the entertainment value. To the casual observer, some of the children's performances may be more or less distressing; but in the rural community, where young and old are well acquainted, all are yearning over each child, rejoicing in his successes and overlooking his failures. There is no greater drawing card for parents than their own children. Certainly the attendance of children should not be solicited, but where it is a community practice it should not be frowned upon until all the "ifs" and "ands" have been considered.

Meeting the Social Situation

AS the rural association is not limited in membership to parents and teachers, its program must have a broader appeal than does that of an urban organization. The school and its program are of interest to all, but child and youth welfare in general are of greater interest. Of still greater concern is community welfare, which in the long run practically determines the welfare of the school. The effectiveness of any school depends upon community interest and support.

Provision for winter sports and socially approved dances for young and old alike are as much association matters as beautifying the school grounds, leveling the playground, or discussing juvenile delinquency. County health units and group health insurance are as important as the Summer Round-Up and the immunization program. Job-getting and adjustment to a new way of life for persons moving to the industries of the city offer guidance problems on a par with those of educational guidance and preparation for marriage and home life. County libraries and bookmobiles take their place in interest with the selection of gift books and the comic strip argument.

Migratory labor, minority groups, child and youth labor in agriculture, tenancy, large commercial farms *vs.* owner-operated farms, and racial and international relationships—all these have elements in common with democracy in the classroom, the teaching of citizenship, and other phases of modern educational philosophy. Governmental trends and rural-urban conflicts become part and parcel of the question of consolidation of schools, larger units of administration and supervision, state and Federal aid for schools and health. Throughout these and many other possible program topics runs a unifying thread—the well-being of children and youth, which is the main-spring of the parent-teacher movement.

The rural P.T.A. is more homogeneous in its membership than is its urban counterpart. In keeping with the practice, and the reasoning back of that practice, of the Federal Census Bureau, sociologists, economists, and educators generally, the P.T.A. accepts the term “rural” as including communities in the open country and centers of less than 2,500 population. In 1940, such communities held 51 per cent of the nation’s children and 43 per cent of the total population.

Practically all these people are dependent economically, either directly or indirectly, upon agriculture and the extractive industries. There is relatively little spread in social, economic, educational, or cultural background, at least within the individual community. This fact tends to increase the number of common interests and reduces the variation in ability to work toward common ends. But it also limits the number of those with specialized interests and abilities who may

be called upon for service and leadership within the group; it also limits the interplay of thought and experience that may be brought to bear upon a given problem.

A homogeneous membership is both an asset and a liability in program building, particularly for programs built upon local interests and needs, as P.T.A. programs should be built. Urban people are constantly bombarded with criticisms and suggestions that help to break down their complacency (though there are always other forces equally active and articulate in their efforts to lull the public into complacency). Rural community life is less frequently subjected to these conflicting viewpoints, and so the people are less likely to question their way of life or to try to see it in perspective.

The sensing of needs and the envisioning of desirable and feasible changes and developments cannot be left wholly to local initiative. But until the members of the association themselves feel the need for understanding and change, there will be little vitality in the program. Although inspiration, stimulation, and guidance may come in part from without, conviction, day-by-day leadership, and the ultimate follow-through can come only from within the group.

The Neighborhood Solves the Problem

THOSE associations which are in truly social-minded neighborhoods or communities have an integrating force that makes for a more vital program. Space here does not permit a full explanation of that statement. Suffice it to say that the rural neighborhood or community is held together by social, economic, cultural, and geographic factors of such validity and intensity as to defy arbitrarily determined political boundaries or boundaries imposed with primary concern for economic efficiency. Sometimes the school area proves too large, too ill-conceived, or too loosely knit for a vital P.T.A. In some such areas, regular meetings within neighborhoods, with less frequent joint sessions of the total school community, have proved more successful than might be expected. Particularly for the study groups associated with the consolidated school P.T.A. do the neighborhoods prove effective units. These should be closely related to the parent organiza-

tion, lest they tend to cause or to widen cleavages within the larger community.

The rural association shares a common cause with the urban association; through the state and national congresses it joins its strength with that of the urban association. But its program remains indigenous to rural life; its techniques and procedures are those familiar enough to rural people to be effective. The rural association is not a diminutive or a modified urban association; the rural program does not dilute, adapt, or ape the urban program. The national and the state congresses are but the unified voices of the local units. Control is not from the top down, but from the bottom up.

This is not to minimize the significance of the larger units or their importance to the well-being of the tiniest and most remote group. Since its inception in 1897, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers has progressed far in program building; it has refined its techniques of promoting free and democratic discussion, of translating common agreement into activity and reality, and of avoiding entangling alliances. The local rural unit remains an entity, with its own peculiar problems and its own peculiar ways and means of reaching its objectives; yet it has much to gain by joining forces with the larger units and by giving heed to the experiences of the many other local units, urban as well as rural.

Simplifying the Approach

SOMETIMES the organizational set-up of officers, committees, and procedures recommended by the national and the state congresses may prove too comprehensive for the small beginning unit. If so, a simpler organization with a minimum of officers and committees is to be recommended.

Perhaps the manual of procedure is too detailed, and the formalities recommended for the conduct of business meetings too elaborate. Then, as in good teaching, the unit should begin where it is in organizational experience. In the long run, of course, it will be profitable and expeditious to move toward the recommended system, for the recommended procedures have grown out of long years of expe-

rience. If at first business cannot be conducted formally, informal discussion must be used; but with growing experience will come increased respect for rules of order. The objectives, not the machinery, are of primary importance.

For the rural association, the larger unit of most immediate help is the county or district council. The council is almost exclusively a clearing center for rural interests. Schools of instruction, rural program building, and county-wide projects are its concern. Much of the inspiration and stimulation needed by the local rural unit, much of the necessary interpretation of state and national programs and policy in terms of local rural needs, is there to be found. Participation in state and national conferences is much to be desired by rural association members, for through it they gain a larger vision and a sense of the strength of a united effort; but in the county council they will find more immediate and practical aid.

Teacher and Community Participation

PARADOXICALLY, the role of the teacher in the rural P.T.A. is both more and less important than that of the teacher in the urban group. In the city schools, only part of the teaching force is active in association work. In the rural organization, whether the school is a one-teacher or a village school, practically every teacher is an active member, seldom missing a meeting. But, because of the relatively rapid turnover of rural teachers and the fact that many are not residents of the school area, it is essential that the program be built upon local lay leadership rather than on the professional type. It occurs so frequently as to be almost a rule that the rural teacher is secretary or secretary-treasurer of the unit, for it is she who has the easiest and most immediate means of sending out notices, and often it is she who has had most experience in keeping records and carrying on correspondence.

The raising of money and the purchase of equipment have persisted in rural associations to an extent no longer known in urban centers. This may not be wholly bad. That the financing of education is a

public responsibility is a valid argument against the practice. But in most rural school communities the P.T.A. workers and the taxpayers are practically one and the same, so there is less danger of either shifting the responsibility to the other. Rural people, perhaps more than urban people, need this type of cooperative experience as an opening wedge to broader cooperative thinking and planning for the common good.

The practice is closely related to another that is gaining in rural schools, one that has the encouragement of leaders in rural education: As the rural school moves toward becoming a true community school, the adults of the community not only live a more school-centered personal life but play more of a part in the daily program of the school. Projects in local history, international and racial understanding, soil conservation, fly elimination, sanitation, salvage and repair, nutrition and food preservation, safety education, etc., become community-wide in scope and participation. This assures vital and continuing interest.

For special programs, excursions and field days, 4-H Clubs, health examinations, etc., adult leadership or adult aid is relied upon. In the school lunch program, adults not only aid in the initial purchase of equipment but frequently volunteer their help in the preparation and serving of the food. In many home gardens one row is set aside for the school; in many home cellars one shelf of canned goods is set aside to supplement school resources.

True, the hot noon lunch conducted as a cooperative project in many rural schools far antedates the P.T.A. But this close relationship between school and community may well be fostered by the association. In urban schools there is beginning recognition of the need for volunteer assistants; in rural schools, voluntary cooperative participation—somewhat different from volunteer assistance—is increasingly becoming an integral part of the school program. And so, although purchase of school equipment by the rural P.T.A. should not be promoted, the spirit of the act is so closely related to various desirable outcomes that it should not be entirely discouraged without careful consideration.

Entangling Alliances

LIKE any other parent-teacher association, the rural group should cooperate with organizations recognized by the national and the state congresses as serving the best interests of children and youth. But for the rural association caution is important. There are frequently agents or agencies that wish to cooperate or are willing to furnish a program or two, who soon, instead of cooperating, are working through the group for their own purposes. When an organized, functioning group is not sufficiently discriminating—or suspicious, if you like—to avoid this pitfall, perhaps the intruders are not to be too much censured. Sometimes they represent agencies of unquestionably high motives; at other times they are individuals or agencies who have no scruples about using an already organized and functioning group instead of going to the trouble to organize in their own behalf. All too frequently the P.T.A. after a time ceases to exist, sometimes being supplanted by the other organization. Then again, both the parent-teacher association and the intruding group may lose out, several years elapsing before another association can be formed. This happens frequently enough to call for a word of warning, a plea for close adherence to the non-entangling policy of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers.

Possibly this chapter has seemed to dwell upon the differences rather than the likenesses between rural and urban associations. The latter are by far the more numerous and obvious. But to ignore the few very significant differences is to handicap the rural work. Both the rural and the urban association must start from where they are, using the personnel and the tools at their disposal. Where the personnel and the tools and their use are similar, each profits the more from the experience of the other and from their joint endeavor. Where the personnel and the tools and their use are inherently different, ignoring the differences is the surest way to weaken the individual and total effort.

Public Opinion and the P.T.A.

By MARY T. BANNERMAN

Importance of child welfare legislation.—Résumé of P.T.A. activities in this field.—Method of procedure on legislative matters.—Growth of public interest in child welfare legislation.—Organizational limitations and legislative gains.—Obstacles to legislative progress.—Ultimate goals.

THROUGHOUT history, men of vision have endeavored to enact into law those principles that experience has shown to enlarge man's freedom and to protect his inalienable rights. From the Roman code to the Magna Charta, from the Mayflower Compact to the Constitution of the United States, these two purposes have been paramount. The legislative program of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, an organization firmly cemented in the ideals of democracy, has objectives identical with these, the only modification being that strong and special emphasis is laid on those aspects of freedom in which children are involved or concerned. The supremacy of the rights of the individual, the sanctity of the home, the necessity for continuous search for truth and practice of its principles in daily living, and the protection of all these values by due process of law—these are the cornerstones on which democracy is founded, and they are also basic to the parent-teacher movement.

Article II of the National Bylaws of this organization summarizes the parent-teacher legislative goal in these words:

"To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth."

Recognizing the home as the basic social unit and the child as "belonging" to the family, this organization accordingly recognizes that responsibility for child welfare legislation must begin with parents. Democratic society has its beginning in the home. There its principles are first taught by precept and example, and there alone can its ideals be implanted in the child's mind at the very beginning of his life.

But, in order to provide for the child's education and to control his general environment, it is necessary for parents to work with other parents, with teachers, and with various community agencies. This immediately broadens the responsibility for child welfare, taking in the community and making it an extension of the home. Cooperation becomes essential; alertness to the community's needs in matters pertaining to child welfare and child protection becomes obligatory; and suitable action must be taken to meet these needs as they are revealed.

The parent-teacher association, accordingly, has a grave responsibility in the legislative field. "What the best and wisest parent wants for his child, that must we seek for all children," is a true expression of the parent-teacher ideal. The realization of this ideal is sought through the tireless activities of nearly thirty national standing committees and their state and local counterparts. The committee on Legislation is one of the most active of these.

Through the Years

THE history of this committee's work represents a rapid and orderly evolutionary growth. In 1903, when the national organization was only six years old, a committee on Juvenile Court and Probation was formed to supervise the work for delinquent, defective, and dependent children. A resolution was passed advocating regular courses of instruction for the training of probation officers and all persons placed in charge of such children. The Congress did not, of course, actually initiate the juvenile court and probation system; but so thorough and painstaking was its interest in the subject that its strong influence must be unquestioned. Even at that early date the program of the national convention offers sufficient evidence of this interest, for,

in addition to probation and the juvenile court system, child labor and a number of other related problems received extensive emphasis.

In 1911, according to the national president's report several years later, the Congress inaugurated a national movement toward the establishment of mothers' pensions, which met with wide misunderstanding and opposition. The persistence and determination with which this effort was sustained are sufficiently shown by the fact that today these pensions are everywhere recognized as one of the most important measures possible for the protection of children.

During the same year (1911) important progress was made by the National Congress toward securing a child hygiene department in every state board of health. Interest in the juvenile court and the probation system was maintained without intermission or slackening. In the year 1915, when in a certain Western state the question arose of retaining or not retaining the juvenile court as a separate establishment of justice, the National Congress acted promptly and strongly in support of its retention. In 1919 a committee was appointed to promote the idea of having all supervision of delinquent children united under school authorities.

The year 1924 marked the adoption of an important general resolution:

WHEREAS, the protection and care of neglected children is one of the highest duties of any state, and

WHEREAS, in some states the juvenile courts are still undeveloped or inadequately equipped; therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the associations of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers in each state be urged to study their juvenile court laws and methods of procedure; and that they work to promote a high standard of such service, which includes separate hearings of children's cases, adequate detention facilities, investigation and supervision of skilled workers, provision for physical and mental examination of girls by women, and the elimination of all unnecessary publicity.

Thus it is evident how the legislative work of the Congress proceeded from its early beginnings with these vital measures to the highly specialized and many-branching legislative program that characterizes the organization's work today. Support of such needed legis-

lation as the Pure Food and Drug Act and the various early measures introduced to combat the undesirable aspects of child labor were matters of routine, since all had direct bearing upon the welfare of youth. The child labor problem is still a matter of immediate concern, particularly since the outbreak of war. With the advent of motion pictures as a major recreational interest, the Legislation committee began studying problems in this field, such as the provision of wholesome and suitable film fare for children and youth and the abolition of compulsory block booking and blind selling; both of these issues are alive and important today. Typical of the many other current needs that are being studied and met by the Congress legislative committees today are the need of Federal aid to insure equalization of educational opportunity; the need of emergency aid for community health and educational facilities; and the need of maximum local control in all legislation affecting children.

Great progress has been made in recent years. In the field of juvenile protection, for example, study of the causes of delinquency has resulted in provision of many constructive activities to engage the interest of young people and prevent their straying from a wholesome and character-developing way of life. Playgrounds, gardens, and school buildings with auditoriums, shops, libraries, gymnasiums, and other facilities that were rarely found forty years ago are now becoming standard equipment.

Program Making

IN order to become a part of the official legislation program of the National Congress, a measure must have the official approval of thirty state congresses. But whether on the local, the state, or the national level, the first duty of a new Legislation chairman is to familiarize himself thoroughly with his organization's program. This program has already been widely endorsed; it is not, and never should be, the creation of the Legislation chairman or of any other individual. As presumably the original program was adopted only after painstaking study of needs, so each new item added to it should be based upon *needs*—imperative needs that can be met by no other method. Fre-

quently the enforcement of laws already on the statute books, better administration, or an aroused public opinion is a sounder method of solving a problem than is the enactment of a new law. When all these have been tried and have failed, then, in cooperation with public officials, other civic groups, and religious leaders, the Legislation chairman discovers the most urgent needs and undertakes thorough research to ascertain how similar needs are best being met in other localities. This research is not confined to the chairman's own state; perhaps some other state has done a better job. Federal research agencies exist for the purpose of collecting and disseminating, on request, information on almost every subject. Some of these agencies are equipped to assist states and local communities in the drafting of legislation to solve their problems.

The importance of P.T.A. work in legislation at the local level must not be underestimated. City councils, for example, are likely to have a stronger, more direct, and more pervading influence upon local government than the national organization itself can have upon government at its own level. Work of immeasurable value to children and youth can be and often is accomplished by the branch organizations, both urban and rural. Health services, new school buildings and equipment, community recreation programs, conditions contributing to juvenile delinquency—these present vital local problems to be solved, and the local P.T.A. can provide the best possible means of coordinating all forces in the community to work toward their solution.

When the needs have been discovered and the best ways to meet them have been determined, the next step is to draft a bill. This is a highly technical task; it requires legal research to ascertain how the new provisions dovetail with existing statutes, what court decisions on the subject have been rendered, and what language should be employed to accomplish the objectives sought without violating the pattern of government established by the Constitution of the United States and that of the particular state involved. It is impossible to be too careful in the drafting of a new measure. The bulk of official parent-teacher endeavor with regard to legislation, however,

consists in the building of public and legislative opinion rather than in the actual drafting of new measures. Even a well-drafted bill to meet a "crying need" gets nowhere unless public opinion is back of it. No legislator cares to "stick his neck out" by sponsoring a bill that has not a goodly measure of public support. It is not fair to ask him to.

Accordingly, before a legislator is asked to sponsor a bill, the bill should have the approval of a sufficient number of mutual interest groups and prominent citizens to insure a fair chance of its being passed. The importance of choosing a sponsor who is wholeheartedly committed to the objective sought cannot be overestimated. The sponsor should be a member—preferably the chairman—of the committee to which the bill is referred.

Campaign for Enactment

A GOOD bill having been drafted, an enthusiastic and able sponsor chosen, and introduction and reference to the proper committee accomplished, the next step is wide publicity.

The Legislation committee, which has already made a thorough study of the bill and its implications, now turns its attention to a program of public education through addresses, radio broadcasts, study groups, classes, and regular parent-teacher meetings. Copies of the bill or a prepared digest of the bill are circulated as widely as possible. If a sufficient number of copies of the formal draft of the bill is unobtainable, the principles embodied in it may be outlined clearly and concisely and disseminated as widely as possible. Letters are written both to the sponsors of an approved bill and to the legislators whose action will affect the bill's passage, since the latter should be guided largely by what the "folks at home" think. The parent-teacher association is active in promoting the circulation of such letters not only as official organizational releases but as individual communications from interested persons, both members and nonmembers. Participation of this kind by every citizen is encouraged. The cooperation of like-minded agencies and organizations is sought, and the bill is supported and promoted by every legitimate device that does not

conflict with any policy or principle of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. All this publicity is directed toward the enlistment of broader support and then toward the securing of a hearing on the merits of the proposed legislation.

The further progress of the bill depends largely upon the official hearing. A Congressional hearing is no place for loose thinking or careless statements. If the bill is controversial, the testimony of every proponent will be dissected and criticized by the opponents—another reason why legislation should be well drafted and carefully studied both before and after its drafting. A good bill is easier to defend and serves to classify the character of the opposition.

Close cooperation of proponents of a measure with its legislative sponsor is of great advantage. This is best accomplished by the coordination of all supporting groups under a chairman chosen for the particular measure involved. Much time can thus be saved for both legislators and supporting groups. A good legislator will always keep the chairman informed of the legislative situation and of any assistance needed, and a good group chairman will keep all supporting groups informed. Frequently, when the groups are in complete agreement, the chairman is authorized to speak for the group. When there is any doubt, committee meetings are held and agreements reached. Disagreement among proponents or the confusion of “crossed wires” plays into the hands of opponents.

Tactics and Timing

TIMELINESS is an important factor. A good sponsor will be alert to select the time most advantageous for securing favorable action and will thus protect the bill from becoming involved in legislative “horse-trading.” The judgment of a reliable sponsor on the time for action should be accepted as final.

Lobbying—enlisting support first of members of the committee having jurisdiction over a bill and then of other members of the legislative body—is carried on with dignity and with due consideration for the many demands upon the legislators’ time. Facts, not mere arguments, are furnished them. If they appear unreasonably opposed,

the parent-teacher committee does not argue; it lets their own constituents deal with them. It is always assumed that they are statesmen, not mere politicians, and the Legislation chairman never fails to express the gratitude of his organization to all who have rendered genuine assistance in passing a bill supported by his group. Legislators are human, and only good can result from expressing appreciation for "an invaluable service to the children of your state." Also, it paves the way for passage of the next bill in which the committee is interested.

Once begun, support of a sound measure to meet a crying need is carried through to final enactment even if it takes twenty years—unless the objective sought is achieved by some other means.

Growth of Interest

HOW can we account for the phenomenal growth of public interest in legislation? To this question there are many answers. Its origin is found in the fundamental nature of the parent-child relationship. It was to save their children that Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt. Numerous throughout history are records of parents who endured great hardships and defied tyrannical rulers to protect their children.

In modern times in our own country, the pioneering work, even before woman suffrage, done by the Woman's Christian Temperance Union awakened a new consciousness of civic strength and responsibility. The woman suffrage movement was undoubtedly greatly accelerated by the pioneering prohibitionists. But until the suffrage amendment really became the "law of the land," legislators paid little attention to legislation supported largely by the "weaker sex." This traditional attitude persisted for a few years even after ratification of the amendment—but not for long; women at the polls no longer discharged their sole obligation by serving coffee and doughnuts.

Through the years since then, organized groups, by serious study, improved techniques, and better organization, justified and received the respect and consideration of legislators. The suffering resulting from the economic depression of a decade ago brought many new recruits to the legislative field. Sound teaching methods, based upon

the nature of growth—"from the known to the unknown," "from-the-ground-up"—have generated a sense of obligation as well as of interest. That consciousness of strength which accrues from accomplishment has added enthusiasm to interest. And the challenge of new philosophies diametrically opposed to democracy everywhere seeking to control "from-the-top-down" furnishes a further incentive to action.

There has never been any specific program to stimulate interest. Rather, interest has grown normally through desire to meet needs and satisfaction in accomplishment. The development of interest in specific bills is largely a matter of good publicity. News releases issued in organization publications and the public press, magazine articles, radio broadcasts, addresses, study groups, and dramatic skits—all have been found helpful.

It must be remembered, however, that all these methods are employed by the parent-teacher association in accord with definite procedures and only after careful study. Limits are inevitable in a national organization as complex as the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, with policies so strict as regards partisanship or commercialism in any form. Frequently it is thought better to emphasize adequate enforcement of measures already on the statute books than to promote new legislation to take their place.

Although the local, state, and national responsibilities of the parent-teacher association are pretty clearly defined, such is the relationship of each unit to the others that whatever worth-while accomplishment is achieved by one tends to strengthen all. This has resulted in significant advances.

Less than ten years ago, passage of two parent-teacher-supported bills during a state legislative session was regarded as a great victory; but during the past two years a number of state chairmen have reported from 75 per cent to 90 per cent success in the enactment of comprehensive state programs. This is largely due to educating the legislators about the P.T.A. program at the opening session and to educating the membership about the legislators and how to deal with them on a friendly basis.

Obstacles to Progress

WHAT are the chief obstacles to progress in your state?" is a question on which for a number of years state chairmen were asked to report. The reply most frequently made was "apathy." Others were "lack of understanding, lack of responsibility, and partisan politics." These obstacles are rapidly being overcome through the employment of improved legislative techniques, wider dissemination of facts through legislation study groups, legislative councils (representatives of cooperating organizations), and better publicity.

Opportunist philosophy, although less often mentioned as an obstacle by state chairmen, frequently appears in legislation for which parent-teacher support is sought. This obstacle, more difficult to discover, is much more dangerous to child welfare, for in it are the germs of juvenile delinquency and "malignant civic growth." Symptomatic of opportunist philosophy are such faulty techniques as steamroller methods of seeking support, efforts to suppress opposition testimony, undue haste, withholding of important facts, and dissemination of misleading publicity. Discovery of undemocratic implications in a bill requires careful study of the provisions and an effort to square them one with another and with the principles of democracy. It is the provisions of the bill, not the fine-sounding testimony about it, that will affect the lives and well-being of citizens. Preparation of digests of bills, a service begun by the National Congress of Parents and Teachers in 1941 and now being rendered by a growing number of state Legislation chairmen, is an excellent method of discovering unsound and conflicting philosophies. As a means of building civic defense, some work of this kind might well be included in the curriculum of teacher training institutions.

Opportunity for Constructive Action

FREQUENTLY too much reliance is thoughtlessly placed on curing all worldly evils by "passing a law." No law is any stronger than the public opinion that supports it. After thirty years of experience as a member of the House of Representatives of the United States,

Speaker Sam Rayburn said, not long ago, "A little religion mixed with law-making is a good thing." In fact, there is no richer source of wisdom about laws than the Bible.

Parents and teachers completely aware of their strength and their responsibility in building a happy and peaceful world are a compelling force with unlimited potentialities. But it is the methods of attainment that require study, prayer, and meditation.

The attitude of the parent-teacher association toward the legislation it sponsors is wholly without the bias that results from self-interest in any form. This organization exists for the welfare of children and youth, and that welfare is the basis, and the sole basis, on which legislation is selected for support. The National Congress of Parents and Teachers not only has nothing to gain from this legislation but is committed by its own self-imposed policies to seek no other advantage from legislation than the advantage that accrues to youth itself.

A Cooperative Philosophy

By VIRGINIA MERGES KLETZER

Necessity for cooperation between home and school.—How such cooperation may be achieved.—Advantages of P.T.A. membership to both teachers and parents.—What educators think of the P.T.A.—Qualities that make for successful parent-teacher leadership.—Achieving unity of purpose between teachers and parents.—World conditions and the heightened need of cooperation.

IN THE modern world, practically all progress is a matter of cooperation. People have learned that fused effort can bring forth miracles of achievement where individual effort, however earnest and devoted, would fail.

The National Congress of Parents and Teachers was one of the first organizations to make this discovery. Beginning on a simple and forthright basis of cooperation among mothers for the good of their children, this organization has advanced through the years to cooperation on an almost limitless scale—cooperation with homes, with schools, with community institutions and agencies, with other national organizations, with religious groups, and with governmental agencies and officials in all fields. But of all the cooperative efforts undertaken since the inception of the parent-teacher movement, the most important is that directed toward building mutual understanding between the two most powerful influences in the life of any child—the home in which he receives his earliest concepts of life, nature, and responsibility, and the school in which so great a part of his developing years must be spent.

In the education of a child the cooperation of every participant is not only desirable but essential. It is every parent's concern what is

being taught in the school, and it is no less every teacher's concern what is being taught in the home.

Too frequently we tend to limit our concept of education. Many of us act as though we believed the end of all schooling to be the accumulation and retention of skills, rules, and formulas. But, as Ruskin has said, education "is not to teach people to know what they do not now know, but to teach them to behave as they do not now behave." With this idea as a premise, it is at once apparent that co-operation between home and school is the only thing that can secure the desired result.

Parents and the School

HOW is this cooperation to be obtained? There has been an unfortunate impression that parents need never go to school until the child has trouble with his studies or is involved in a disciplinary situation. In either case the atmosphere established is more or less unpleasant and certainly will not lead to better understanding. The appearance of a parent at school is frequently distasteful to the child because he associates it, or thinks his classmates will associate it, with trouble and humiliation. This is a state of affairs that should never have been allowed to arise. If all parents had always visited the school frequently and casually, as they might pay any other interested and friendly call, such a situation could not have developed at any time.

Moreover, there are many strong reasons why parents should know what is going on in school. A child's reaction to his agefellows, his behavior among them, his attitude toward school and school activities—all these are things that cannot be learned while he is observed exclusively in his home. Yet all of them are things that parents should know.

Parents are entitled, also, to a direct personal acquaintance with the quality of the instruction their children are obtaining. There are teachers and teachers—some who are merely concerned with teaching the multiplication tables, and many who are building citizens capable of creating a human society with a heart and a soul. In this connection one thinks of the old story of the three stonemasons. "What are

you doing?" someone asked them. "I'm laying stone," replied one. "I'm earning fifteen dollars a day," chimed in the second. The third laid down his trowel for a moment and looked proudly at the work of his hands. "I'm building a cathedral," he said.

If an insight into school life on the part of parents is one of the first essentials of adequate education, the school's understanding of the home is certainly no less than that. Yet it is usually impossible for a teacher to visit frequently enough in the homes of her pupils to obtain a true picture of each one's home and family background. In this respect the old-fashioned system under which the teacher "boarded 'round" among the school's patrons had its decided advantages. Since modern conditions make this impracticable, some other way must be found in which teachers can get a perspective on the lives of the children they teach.

The Need of Mutual Help

THE only way in which this can be done effectively is by personal contact of teachers and parents. The sort of cooperation needed between home and school cannot be achieved by remote control. If common objectives and ideals are to be developed among all those engaged in the education of the young, techniques for the pooling of ideas must be established. There is a constant need for interpretation of new trends and methods in education; most parents have been out of touch with academic life for years and cannot be expected to understand these without help. There is an equally constant and urgent need for promotion of friendly personal relationships between parents and teachers, based upon a thorough mutual understanding of each child and his individual needs.

It becomes obvious, then, that personal conferences are indicated. To date, parent-teacher associations have proved the most effective mediums for achieving the desired result. Through the conferences and activities of an alert parent-teacher group in which both elements—home and school—are adequately represented, nearly all the problems in this field can be surely and happily solved. It would be too much to say that they are so solved in every instance; but great progress

has undoubtedly been made, and still greater progress is not only possible but highly probable. The gains already made toward better understanding and sounder cooperation can scarcely fail to lead to further benefits.

Tremendous advantages should accrue to both parents and teachers from membership in a parent-teacher association. Among parents in general it is the consensus that these advantages *are* being obtained. Clearer insight into educational processes, better social and working relationships with teachers, and much better understanding of the child's relationship to the school have been reached. To some extent, at least, this may be said to apply to every parent who is a member of a parent-teacher association. The degree of benefit varies, of course, with many variable factors—the interest of the parent in school and parent-teacher affairs, the individual parent's capacity for understanding, the quality of organizational leadership, and the general tone and resources of the community. But in almost no case can it be said that no benefit has been obtained. Here and there complaints have been heard of lack of interest and sympathy on the part of educators, but these are sporadic and are more than counterbalanced by enthusiastic reports of ready and friendly cooperation.

What Educators Say

THIS, however, is but one side of a picture in which there are definitely two sides to be seen. How is it with the educators themselves? Do they consider parent-teacher membership worth while? Have they found the parent-teacher association an effective medium through which to interpret their own purposes and objectives to the parents of their pupils and to develop the insight they need as to the individual requirements of the children?

In an effort to obtain direct answers to these questions and several others, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers recently submitted to school superintendents, principals, and classroom teachers a questionnaire asking for full and frank replies to several queries concerning the worth of the parent-teacher organization, its relations with the teaching personnel, its leadership, its effectiveness, and the

extent to which it fulfills its avowed purposes in the school and in the community. The questionnaire included a request for any suggestions to improve the quality of P.T.A. work.

The response was gratifying in respect to both frankness and pertinence. The consensus was that the P.T.A. is doing an excellent job of interpreting home and school to each other; that P.T.A. leadership (this was nearly unanimous) is on the whole cooperative and sympathetic; and that no serious friction has arisen between teachers and parents as the result of any P.T.A. activity. Occasional flare-ups have occurred, but these have nearly always been due to misunderstanding over the conduct or scholastic inadequacy of some particular pupil and really have nothing to do with the P.T.A. as an organization. Even in these cases the parent-teacher association has often succeeded in bringing about a satisfactory adjustment of a trying situation.

School administrators express themselves as thoroughly satisfied, in general, with the P.T.A.'s adherence to its stated policy of noninterference with school administration. Here too, as is inevitable in any organization of more than two million six hundred thousand members, there is an occasional exception. Any attempt on the part of a too zealous leader to overstep this regulation, however, is usually handled promptly and sufficiently by the organization itself; for no policy of the National Congress is more rigidly enforced than this one. One superintendent said: "The P.T.A. organizations here have this slogan for their motto: 'We work for the schools; the teachers work in the schools.' We administrators think the P.T.A.'s have been very valuable to our schools. For the most part, they have lived up to their motto." This is a typical reply.

Worth Bears Its Own Witness

TO the question "To what extent is the P.T.A. failing to make the most of its great potentialities?" most of the educators answered that they know of no such failure and that, on the contrary, the achievements of the organization have been highly worth while. An occasional criticism was made of failure to reach certain parents who stand in particular need of what the parent-teacher organization has

to give—members of population groups handicapped by alien backgrounds, limitations of language, or underprivileged social status. This criticism may perhaps be thought to apply with equal force to educational organizations, as the field of work indicated is one with which they are equally concerned. This has long been recognized by the National Congress as an area in which strong and determined effort is necessary, and, in spite of almost insuperable obstacles, good progress is being made. It is to be hoped that the new feeling of universal neighborliness engendered by the national war effort will result in considerable strides toward the solution of this problem.

In appraisal of parent-teacher programs, most of the teachers and administrators expressed wholehearted approval. A few complained of "dull programs." Oddly enough, however, the strongest adverse criticisms that appeared in the questionnaires were self-criticisms—disapproval directed toward teachers who are uninterested in the potentialities of parent-teacher work, unwilling to become members or to serve on committees, or defensive toward parents in general and therefore not well disposed toward the organization. The strong consensus was that any teacher or administrator who fully realizes the possibilities of parent-teacher work toward lifting educational standards and maintaining them on a consistently high level is more than willing to assume the full responsibilities of membership. One hundred per cent teacher participation was recorded in many instances.

Pattern for Leadership

ASKED to list qualities that make for successful parent-teacher leadership, the educators laid particular stress on (1) understanding of community life and problems; (2) tact and ability to get on with other people; (3) cheerfulness and humor; (4) willingness to cooperate; (5) genuine friendliness; (6) enough education to insure good understanding and adequate interpretation of educational methods, policies, and purposes; (7) honesty and fair-mindedness; (8) willingness to study; (9) devotion to parent-teacher ideals; and (10) "... vision, tolerance, poise, and judgment, the ability to work with others as demonstrated in some minor official capacity."

In connection with the qualities listed it is most interesting to observe that nearly every respondent, in his appraisal of the current level of parent-teacher leadership, gave it unstinted approval. To the query "Is the leadership in your P.T.A. cooperative and sympathetic?" such replies as "Yes, entirely," "Always has been," and "Absolutely tops" were frequent. This is a heartening response indeed, for strong emphasis on good leadership is characteristic of the parent-teacher organization on all levels, from the National Congress to the smallest local unit, and certainly the traits mentioned by the educators set no low standard. If P.T.A. leadership today is considered by a representative group of teachers and administrators to have met these challenging criteria, there is good reason to feel that the organization will reach, at no very distant date, fulfillment of its utmost potentialities.

In order to bring about closer unity of purpose and better personal relationships between teachers and parents, the educators suggested that parent-teacher associations:

1. Build their programs around specific local needs.
2. Hold more frequent conferences between parents and teachers.
3. Encourage more frequent meetings on a social basis.
4. Vary the time of meeting so as to allow fathers, mothers, and teachers to attend. Stress activities in which fathers can be included.
5. Promote frequent panel discussions and symposiums on definite community problems. Include student representatives in these discussions.
6. See that teachers and administrators, as well as parents, are represented on parent-teacher committees.
7. Constantly educate both teachers and parents as to the real purposes of parent-teacher work.
8. Promote the circulation of parent-teacher publications, both state and national. Encourage more frequent publication of articles by laymen interested in educational problems.
9. Keep everyone busy on constructive work.
10. Encourage more participation of parents, teachers, and young people; limit outside speakers to one or two a year and make use of local talent.
11. Make all aims definite and all programs purposeful.
12. Serve refreshments, however simple, at all parent-teacher meetings.
13. Plan programs that will attract nonmembers. Keep the programs short and interesting.

14. Elect more men to office.
15. Encourage visiting at school by parents and visiting in homes by teachers.
16. Select all leaders with the utmost care.
17. Cooperate with community agencies in activities for youth welfare.
18. Maintain strict observance of organizational ethics, including non-interference with school administration.

Cooperation and Democracy

MOST of these suggestions already form definite parts of the parent-teacher program; they are points that have been emphasized again and again and yet again by the National Congress and all its branches. We are on the right track, it seems; all that remains is to keep ever on the alert for weak links in the chain and to strengthen those links as promptly and resolutely as the patriotic war worker drives his rivet home.

As the educators themselves have tacitly—and sometimes explicitly—recognized, parents alone cannot make the parent-teacher program effective. The home and the school are a team in double harness, and whatever retards the one must hamper the other. The foregoing answers to the National Congress questionnaire are sufficient evidence that there is a good working basis for effective teamwork.

And never was teamwork more needed. The parent-teacher organization, which is and always has been democratic “from the ground up,” is keenly aware today of the necessity for maintaining strict agreement between its principles and its practice. Cooperation is the basis not only of successful education but of democratic society on a global scale; any deviation from democracy on the part of any of its proponents—organization or individual—would be disastrous.

Lack of cooperation, especially in these times, is certainly a deviation from democracy. Failure of either the home or the school to do its part in the joint enterprise of educating America's future citizens would mean that all the money, all the effort, and all the heartbreak of this war had been wantonly wasted. But with such an excellent understanding between parents and educators as is indicated by the answers to the recent questionnaire there seems little cause for worry lest either the home or the school shirk any part of its responsibility.

An Expanding Effort

THAT membership and service in the parent-teacher association are a part of the responsibility of every parent and every teacher seems to be borne out by the evidence in hand. If the organization does not yet function perfectly, does not yet realize to the full the ideals of its Founders and the Objects for which it exists, who but parents and teachers, working shoulder to shoulder, can bring it to that honor? Who but parents and teachers, united in every effort that makes for the care, protection, and training of children and youth, can insure America a future citizenry worthy of her cherishing?

A glance into the future is often illuminated most brilliantly by a preliminary glance backward into the past. Consider the state of home-school cooperation in this country only fifty years ago—a concept practically summed up in the sufficiently quaint custom of repunishing a child at home every time he was punished at school. This might, perhaps, by a stretch of the imagination, be considered cooperation; but surely it was cooperation in the crudest of all forms and had nothing whatever to do with any clear understanding of the issues involved. Even then, of course, there were exceptions to the general rule—parents and teachers who were deeply and intelligently interested in what was being done for the children and willing to work together to accomplish it. But it was not until the parent-teacher association came on the scene, with its new and startling ideas about cooperation and understanding and guidance, that the general public actually awoke to the fact that education means more than rote recitation and autocratic discipline.

It must not be supposed that this awakening was instant or that it was universal. It was, on the contrary, exceedingly gradual, and was accomplished only through tireless, determined, unremitting effort. This sort of effort has been necessary throughout the life of the organization, and it is no less necessary today. Even now, with cooperative work going forward effectively in scores of different directions, there are gaps to be bridged, emergency needs to be met, weak points to be strengthened. One of the chief objectives of home-school co-

operation today is to correct the tendency of the school to isolate itself from community life, to which its relationship has too often and too strongly resembled that of the pearl to the oyster. The school's greatest effectiveness will be reached when it both reflects and influences community life, and it is difficult to do the latter without first accomplishing the former.

Forecasting the Days Ahead

MANY other problems await their adequate solutions—the problem of equalizing educational opportunity throughout the land; the control of juvenile delinquency; the child labor situation; the dozens of emergency problems arising out of the war effort, both military and industrial. All these things are the joint concern of parents and teachers, and only by the joint endeavors of home and school can they possibly be so handled as to avert disaster.

To one taking the long view, therefore, of the needs and challenges of education in the United States now and during the years to come, the case for parent-teacher cooperation seems proved. The fitness of the parent-teacher association as a cooperating medium seems also to be well established. The growing interest of teacher training institutions in the structure and purposes of the organization is a most encouraging sign. And to the teacher in training, who desires above all things else to make his teaching count in character and citizenship and in constructive, creative living, the parent-teacher association offers authentic help toward the realization of his desire.

As time goes on and the understanding between home and school approaches that perfection which is the hope of the future, it will become utterly unthinkable that there should ever have been any division, in any degree, between the two institutions that have most to do with shaping the child's development. Home and school will move forward as a perfectly coordinated unit, each half performing its allotted task in its due time—not for profit, not for glory, but for “the joy of the working” and the even greater joy of seeing youth at last come into its rightful heritage.

Appendix

IT is a matter of common experience that explanatory material on any subject, and particularly on so complex a subject as a national organization, is greatly simplified by concrete illustration. When the things to be illustrated are intangible, the best illustration is often obtained by suggestion, by the addition of sample materials that carry the "feel" of the subject under discussion.

In the case of the parent-teacher organization, certain highly characteristic publications, pronouncements, and tools of work are perhaps better representative of the spirit of the parent-teacher endeavor than anything that could be found. *Projects and Purposes*, for example, is a summary of methods and objectives that has stood the test of time; it is a permanent contribution to parent-teacher literature and is in constant use throughout the National Congress. Together with the other miscellaneous materials included in this Appendix, it should enable the student to obtain a sure and satisfactory insight with which to implement the factual material contained in the body of this text.

POLICIES AND PRINCIPLES FOR CONGRESS PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS

THE National Congress of Parents and Teachers has for nearly half a century developed certain fundamental principles and procedures to safeguard its parent-teacher associations. The general policies are stated in Article III of the National Bylaws. These policies, which apply to the entire organization of the Congress—national, state, and local—are restated as follows:

1. *Educational*—A major purpose of the Congress parent-teacher association is to secure the cooperation of parents, teachers, and other adult citizens in all that concerns the education and welfare of children and youth. The administration of the school is recognized as the function of school authorities. The National Bylaws provide that Congress parent-teacher associations “shall not seek to direct the administrative activities of the schools or to control their policies.”

2. *Noncommercial*—Congress parent-teacher associations do not endorse commercial enterprises or advertise them at parent-teacher meetings. Gifts involving commercial obligations are not accepted by the association or by its officers. Lists of parent-teacher associations, or of their officers or members, are not available in any form to commercial interests. The name of the association or the names of its officers in their official capacities may not be used in any connection with a commercial concern.

3. *Nonsectarian*—The nonsectarian policy guarantees a recognition of the rights of all to their religious beliefs. It is not the purpose of parent-teacher associations to promote the interests of any one religious denomination. Devotional exercises for opening of meetings shall be thoroughly nonsectarian. Care should be taken that every phase of religion represented in the community is respected.

4. *Nonpartisan*—Parent-teacher associations, their officers and members, in their parent-teacher relationships abstain from partisan activities and discussions, including the endorsement of candidates for public offices. The

nonpartisan political policy does not in any way affect authorized Congress activities in the field of legislation.

5. *Membership in Other Organizations*—A Congress parent-teacher association may not join other organizations, since it is often impossible to function under two sets of bylaws. A Congress parent-teacher association cooperates with other organizations and agencies having allied interests in the field of child welfare. Membership is limited to Congress groups.

6. *Community or Coordinating Councils*—The National Bylaws provide that local parent-teacher associations may unite with other community groups with objectives similar to theirs in developing coordinated programs in such common causes as parent education, crime prevention, schools, libraries, recreation, or other activities concerned with the welfare of children and youth which enlist community support. Participation in a community or coordinating council is very different from joining other organizations, as each constituent organization retains its own identity and its own program and is not bound by commitments which it has not endorsed.

NATIONAL CONGRESS OFFICERS

The officers of the National Congress shall be a president, ten vice-presidents, a secretary, and a treasurer, elected for a term of three years.

These officers shall be divided into three groups: Group one shall consist of the president, first vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. Group two shall consist of the vice-presidents from Regions III, V, VII, and VIII. Group three shall consist of the second vice-president and the vice-presidents from Regions I, II, IV, and VI.

States are divided into Regions as follows:

REGION I	REGION II	REGION III	REGION IV
Maine	New Jersey	North Carolina	Kentucky
New Hampshire	Delaware	South Carolina	Ohio
Vermont	District of	Georgia	Indiana
New York	Columbia	Alabama	Illinois
Massachusetts	Maryland	Tennessee	Michigan
Connecticut	Pennsylvania	Florida	Wisconsin
Rhode Island	West Virginia		
	Virginia		
REGION V	REGION VI	REGION VII	REGION VIII
Minnesota	Mississippi	Hawaii	California
Iowa	Missouri	Washington	Nevada
North Dakota	Arkansas	Oregon	New Mexico
South Dakota	Louisiana	Idaho	Arizona
Nebraska	Oklahoma	Montana	Utah
Kansas	Texas	Wyoming	Colorado

After the election of group one the nominating committee shall present to the Board of Managers at the postconvention Board meeting nominations for three members-at-large, chosen from the Board of Managers, to serve on the Executive Committee.

PROJECTS AND PURPOSES OF THE PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS

Today's Challenge

THE parent-teacher organization, today numbering over two million six hundred thousand adults, faces a new and difficult task—new, because youth in a modern world has new problems and new situations to meet; difficult, because of the sharp demands made by our present social and economic life. If parents and teachers are to keep up with the tempo of present-day living they must revise and bring up to date their modes of dealing with the rising generation. This is essential; for only by so doing can they give to childhood and youth the finest education, the wisest training, the largest opportunity.

It is apparent to everyone that we face today serious questions, serious realities, none of which can be ignored. And it is equally apparent that there is no problem which more vitally concerns parents and teachers than the problem of youth. Nowhere is united action more necessary. The parent-teacher association is sensitive to the conditions that have brought about our present social confusion and widespread distress. It recognizes its power and its responsibility for accomplishing tangible results in the education of young people, since it is to these young people that society looks to bring order out of chaos, rest out of unrest, straight thinking out of crooked.

To fit the oncoming generation for a life in which they must inevitably participate—this is the impelling purpose of the parent-teacher program. It is to this task that the parent-teacher association today turns its earnest attention. Today's test of achievement for the parent-teacher organization is its ability to respond intelligently and purposefully to all the demands of a new citizenship for a new day. In so doing, it is discovering that at certain points a new emphasis, a greater awareness of social needs, is demanded. It is the purpose of these articles to restate and review the scope of parent-teacher work in terms of our modern-day needs—to indicate the nature and place of the whole scheme of parent-teacher activity in terms of new situations, new concepts, new implications for living.

It is the way of humankind to accept without a great deal of thought any institution with which we are familiar. But sometimes a reflective mood seizes us; and when it does, one of our first questions has to do with beginnings. How, we ask, did this thing begin, and when? How *did* the major activities of the parent-teacher association get started? And then come the questions in regard to further development. How does it happen that such subjects as art, visual education, music, recreation, homemaking, and the rest have been selected as suitable for parent-teacher concern? Are these subjects distinct each from the other? Do they fall into loosely arranged divisions, or is there a common element, a fundamental purpose that unites them all?

To answer these questions we go back to the beginning and review the paths by which the movement has traveled toward its present program. All our present projects, our multitudes of committee activities, have grown out of the past, and their growth is conditioned by the depth of their roots. We find that the parent-teacher program is not just a piece of patchwork—it has a definite pattern. In an endeavor to understand the development of that pattern we glean what we can from written records and oral tradition. We look at our yesterdays, and from them we attempt to learn something of the story of our projects and purposes.

The National Congress of Mothers

ACTIVITIES, it need hardly be said, grow out of objects and aims. The more clearly defined are the purposes for whose fulfillment an organization is striving, and the more persistently these are stressed during the course of its development, the more distinct will be the pattern of its program. The purposes of the Founders are therefore of considerable interest. They are found in the code of rules drawn up and presented to the Board of Managers at a meeting held in the spring of 1897, just two months after the historic triumph of the first National Congress of Mothers.

The object of this association shall be to promote conference on the part of parents concerning questions most vital to the welfare of their children, the manifest interests of the home, and in general, the elevation of mankind.

Annual meetings will be held at which the best thoughts may be presented upon all subjects bearing upon the broader and higher physical and mental, as well as on the spiritual training of the young. This association purposes to inculcate love of humanity and love of country, to encourage closer relations between home influences and school life, to promote kindergarten principles from cradle to college, to seek to create in all, those char-

acteristics which shall elevate and ennoble: in short, to work for life development from the standards of knowledge, peace, truth, and harmony.

Problems of Organizing

IN these pioneering days of a movement designed to be national in scope, attention was concentrated heavily upon problems of organization, promotion, and management. The chosen method of carrying out the work of the new organization was by the designation of special duties and activities and the consequent creation of committees. This is reflected in the list of committees mentioned in that first code of rules. The article defining the duties of the Board reads as follows: "The Board of Managers shall consist of seventeen members, that is, the President, five Vice Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer, and chairmen of arrangements, executive, entertainment, finance, literature, press, reception, resolutions, and transportation committees. Members of the committees shall be elected at the annual meetings by the Board, but shall not be members of it." Following this statement the duties of committee members are set forth with clarity and precision.

Lest it be assumed that it was a comparatively easy task to secure individuals to serve on these committees, the following is quoted from the report of a corresponding secretary whose lot it was to notify the nominees of their appointment. Again and again, she writes, such notification met the response from busy workers, "My time is already pledged"; and from still others such words as these: "Pray have me excused"; "I go a-summering"; or "I have bought me a house, and I must needs keep house in it," or "My hopes of leisure are dead, and I must needs go and bury them." Yet it is with great pride that the secretary reports that the committees published on the program of the Second Annual Convention represent the best brain and heart and culture of America.

But what of the program of year-round activities which would seem to have been "indicated" by the announced objects of the new national organization? While in the very early days the leaders and officers of the National Congress undertook to provide a fund of inspiration through the highly important annual meeting, the specific means by which the general purposes were to be carried out were largely determined by the individual mothers' clubs and circles which were being formed rapidly all over the country. Apparently the earliest of what are now called "subject committees" as distinguished from "organization committees" was the Literature committee. It was thought important that mothers should be provided with lists of books suitable for children's reading at various ages, and that publications and periodicals of all sorts relating to the work of the Congress should be on file in a central office. It is a matter of record that people of

distinction in their professional fields gave their earnest cooperation in this effort to meet a patent need.

Work of the Earliest Committees

FROM the start the Congress was community-minded. It was not enough that individual mothers should be taught how to care for individual children; there were other deep concerns to hold the attention of all mothers. There was the evil of child labor; there was the problem of the delinquent, the defective, the dependent. These distinctly social problems, which could not be solved without the enactment of suitable laws, were made the concern of a committee on Child Labor and Legislation within the first five years of the Congress' existence. The specific problems of delinquent, defective, and dependent children were studied by a committee in 1903, and a recommendation was made that classes be established for the training of probation officers and all persons to be placed in charge of such children—perhaps in the summer schools of leading universities. The year 1908 records the creation of a department of the Juvenile Court, a Civic Betterment department, an International committee, and—at the urgent request of the rural districts—a Good Roads and School Improvements committee—all excellent evidence that the Congress of Mothers was thinking in social and broadly humanitarian terms.

It is clear that the leaders in this movement realized early that if a far-flung membership was to be imbued with the great ideals for which it stood, the printed word must be used to advantage no less than the spoken. At a Board meeting in 1900, three years after the founding of the Congress, it was voted to replace the annual *Proceedings* volume with a Quarterly Report, which should contain not only the papers read at conventions but news items from the states, committee reports, and other relevant matter; also to prepare six reading course leaflets to be used for discussion groups. By 1906 plans had matured for the publishing of a magazine.

It is in these proceedings and reports as well as from the magazine that the story of the committee work of the National Congress is found. The committee reports of 1906 give an interesting picture of what was going on in various fields of Congress work. The chairman of the committee on Child Labor reports that three bills under consideration by a Senate committee touch upon the welfare of mothers and children and should be endorsed by the Congress. It is done. The Finance committee is enlarged—by adding several women who it is hoped will pledge themselves to try to raise from fifty to one hundred dollars each during the year, for the work of the Congress. The Press committee gives a report of work which is pronounced excellent. The Legislative committee is enlarged, as is also the Education

committee. The committee on Household Economics makes the suggestion that in the individual circles the Domestic Science committee work for at least one scholarship to be given to some person who would value and use a domestic science training. A special committee on the magazine project submits bids from printers and is authorized to begin publishing within a month. And, finally, a special committee is appointed to revise the bylaws!

Forming a Workable Pattern

EIGHT years later, in 1914, the list of committees reporting upon the fruit of their labors was somewhat longer. The subjects were these: children's book list, child labor, country life, legislation, parent-teacher, publicity, kindergarten, playground, juvenile court, and loan papers. These loan papers, it may be assumed, were the forerunner of directed study courses, a sort of circulating library, Congress-made for Congress members.

Vision widened and membership grew. While basic aims did not change, new channels of service to childhood were constantly opened. Accordingly the program of parent-teacher activity became more and more diversified and the list of committee subjects became longer and longer. A notable development of 1925 was the reorganization of the standing committees into six departments: organization, extension, education, public welfare, home service, health, each consisting of a group of committees. Here was undoubtedly the first attempt to construct a logical and practical system, a functional scheme, which should fairly represent the Congress' ideal of coherent effort toward its goal.

Organization—Child Welfare Day, Child Welfare Magazine, Literature, Membership, Publicity

Extension—P. T. A. in Colleges, P. T. A. in High Schools, P. T. A. in Grade Schools, Recreation, Safety

Education—Art, Humane Education, Illiteracy, Kindergarten Extension, Music, School Education, Students' Loan Fund, Pre-School Circles, P. T. A. in Churches, Study Circles

Public Welfare—American Citizenship, Juvenile Protection, Legislation, Motion Pictures

Home Service—Children's Reading, Home Economics, Home Education, Social Standards, Standards in Literature, Thrift

Health—Child Hygiene, Physical Education, Social Hygiene

In another dozen years these departments were discontinued and the Congress has today a list of twenty-seven standing committees. But this does not indicate that this mode of organization was not a forward step, nor does

it mean that the work has gone backward. It is in the nature of a democratic organization to be responsive to influences arising both within the group and without. A new emphasis in public education, the opening up of a new field of science, the founding of a new national organization—any one of these and other current happenings may lead to the establishment or to the abandonment of a parent-teacher community project. In order to meet changing demands, a constant reorganization must be carried on, as the slow elimination of outworn knowledge takes place or certain fields of knowledge are integrated into larger units. For example, we have today a committee on Mental Hygiene established in 1926. When the Congress was founded thirty years earlier that field of scientific knowledge had not yet been marked off and tilled. In the early days there was a national committee concerned with kindergartens. Today, while individual communities are still concerned with their establishment and maintenance, kindergartens are generally recognized as a part of public school systems; those whose interest is in the very young child are today talking about the preschool child, using a term not commonly heard until recent years.

Thus it is evident that there has been—that there still is—a pattern. As an individual has memories—among them some regrets—so has the parent-teacher organization its memories, some few of them of chances lost or of paths unfollowed. But haphazard its life course has not been. The objects have been reconsidered, reinterpreted, rephrased again and again; but basic aims remain the same—the welfare of children; the enlightenment of those who care for them. So “reminiscing with a purpose” may be a wholesome and an inspiring enterprise. As one project and committee subject after another is brought into the light, we shall see more clearly the broad field of the entire parent-teacher program; we shall know more of its strength and its range; we shall recognize its weaknesses and learn how to correct them; we shall increasingly appreciate its resourcefulness, its strength, and its power for good in our democracy.

Crystallizing the Interests of Mothers

IN all the history of our country there never has been a time when mothers were not interested in acquiring knowledge which would help them in the care and training of their children. Wherever mothers came together in groups—at sociables, quilting bees, or church meetings; on occasions of family reunions, whether joyful or sad; or at public meetings and community gatherings, they discussed their children. The subject matter included sickness and health, obedience and discipline, manners and morals, quarrels and love affairs. Once in a long while one of the group

would read from some book or paper which had fallen into her hands a paragraph which dealt with children. More often, however, the mothers merely exchanged their own experiences, remedies, and solutions—nutmegs strung on a cord for whooping cough or buckets of cold water for an outburst of obstinacy. They voiced their hopes, their pride, and their fears for their children. They shared their joys and their sorrows.

Now and then a mother, tired and worn from the demands of her domestic life, fell asleep and failed to hear a choice bit of wisdom. But even this lapse brought the group more intimately together, for who could understand as well as they what is involved in the daily round of family living? They talked on the nature of all things; reflected, criticized, made of each mother there a bit of a philosopher.

Here and there over the country there developed, from such a background as this, small groups who awakened needs of specific education for the functions of motherhood and family living. As they undertook voluntary and cooperative study, they discovered the need for knowledge which later was to lead them into the fields of child psychology and child development, nutrition and home economics, kindergarten and preschool education, social hygiene and mental hygiene. Upon scenes and experiences such as these, the National Congress of Mothers made its entrance.

Program of the First Meeting

THE call to the historic first meeting in February 1897 established for all time the place of education for home and family living both as a project and as a purpose in the National Congress of Mothers.

It is proposed to have the Congress consider subjects bearing upon the better and broader spiritual and physical, as well as mental training of the young, such as the value of kindergarten work and the extension of its principles to more advanced studies, a love of humanity and of country, the physical and mental evils resulting from some of the present methods of our schools, and the advantages to follow from a closer relation between the influence of the home and that of institutions of learning.

The program of this meeting had as its theme "Need for Child Study," and subjects discussed included character building, stories and story telling, physical culture, and dietetics. Dr. G. Stanley Hall presented an address on "Some Practical Results of Child Study." Among the findings which he believed should be applied in education without delay were principles long since accepted but new to the thinking of the group he addressed:

Excessively fine work, whether in writing or the kindergarten, should be avoided.

Drawing should precede writing, and should begin not with the cube and cylinder, but free-hand with living things in action.

Religious instruction begins in the Nature work; the sight of the forest and of the star, the beauty of the flower, etc., are its watchwords.

Music must be taught by ear and by rote until quite a repertoire of songs is acquired before musical characters are introduced, otherwise we are teaching to read before the child can speak. This analogy holds from the standpoint of brain physiology.

Modern languages taught by the ear method have their most favorable time from the ages of eight to twelve, and ancient, from ten to fifteen.

Literature teaching should begin with story telling, one of the noblest arts.

Interests must be utilized, each at its own golden period; this enables a vast amount of work to be done without fatigue.

He closed his address with the words, "May the mother element dominate this new, potent, and most healthful organization."

As they listened, mothers realized that they lacked those intellectual habits which would enable them to play their parts competently as parents. Their ready acceptance of the need and desirability of study through reading was the more remarkable in a day when purposeful reading was largely limited to the "Bible and the cookery book," a day when Margaret Ogilvy could say with truth that it was considered hardly respectable to read in the morning.

The consequent fulfillment of their need for reading materials was to result in a short span of years in a demand for materials for parents which could not easily be filled, a demand which eventually set both lay organizations and educational institutions busily at work producing hundreds of pamphlets, books, magazines, and other forms of literature.

The considerations of this first session were not limited to generalizations in newer fields of home education. They touched on the practical and older aspects—the ever-present problems of feeding, clothing, and housing children. Mothers learned the importance of even the simplest of household tasks in relation to the child's welfare.

"The boiling of an egg," it was said, "is a point not beneath our consideration. Every woman thinks she can do this, no matter how unskillful she may be in other branches of cooking, yet it is perhaps the least understood of all processes of making food digestible by proper treatment. A mother need not actually cook the food required for her child's well-being, but she should be thoroughly able to direct just how it should be done."

Increased Interest in Home Education

STARTING from the close of the meeting there was an ever widening and deepening interest in home education throughout every channel and aspect of the Congress work. Those who attended carried the story and the import of this first meeting over the length and breadth of the land. In countless communities the interest developed resulted in local programs devoted to the promotion of study for family life. The National Congress, responsive to the growing interest, began to provide in its organizational structure the means by which a program of home education might become a major activity on a national scale.

By 1900 a Domestic Science committee had been appointed and emphasis directed to making domestic science a part of school curriculum. Dr. Hall believed this department to be one of the greatest of the Congress, urging all schools to teach this branch as thoroughly as any other. Leaflets recommending continued work for the establishment of domestic science in schools through teachers' institutions and farmers' institutes were printed that same year by the Education committee.

In keeping with developments in the home economics field, the work of the committee on Domestic Science was merged with the work of the new committee on Household Economics, and eventually with that of Home Economics. Activities were varied. Literature on home economics was widely distributed. Each state was urged to obtain leaflets from the U. S. Department of Agriculture on "Pure Milk" and "Why Domestic Science Should Be Taught in the Schools." In one state small prizes were given to children who made the best bread and pies and cakes. Associations were urged to work for at least one scholarship for some person who would value and use a domestic science training. The passage of the Pure Food Bill was urged.

The work of the Congress in this new field caught the attention of educators. Professor M. V. O'Shea suggested that the Congress make a study of the education of girls. He advised an investigation to find out whether or not the present methods of educating girls in high schools and in colleges were accomplishing the desired results in making women more effective in the lives they must live, and more content in the work they must do. The interest of Government agencies also was aroused in the progress made by the Congress in the field of homemaking, and a secretary in the Home Education Division of the Bureau of Education was directly charged with the responsibility of furthering the cooperative work of the Bureau and the Congress. Resolutions passed by the Congress called upon the schools of the United States to provide education for motherhood and homemaking.

The more deeply the National Congress became concerned in the fields of domestic science and home education, the stronger became its conviction that the home is the most potent and permanent source of influence in the life of the child. It redoubled its efforts, therefore, to be adequately equipped for its challenging task. Its program considered such problems as how to create a desirable atmosphere in the home, how to buy economically, and how to establish schools for parents. It created such committees as Marriage Sanctity, Maternity Care, and Racial Health.

From time to time various new interests were brought into the Congress which received, each in its turn, the attention and consideration of the membership. Some of these interests became a continuing element in the work of the Congress; some were recognized as being outside the scope of the organization's activities; others were dropped as their purpose was fulfilled; and unfortunately, still others were lost because of lack of vision or wisdom to carry them on. But year in and year out the interests and activities and committees which centered around the theme of home and family education were continuously maintained. Whenever any deviation from this pattern was threatened someone reminded the growing organization of the intent which was its unique heritage. The Congress was reminded that a national organization is all too likely unduly to expand its scope, too prone to yield to the temptation of undertaking one reform project after another, too much inclined to follow on crusades. "The strength of the National Congress," it was stated, "has been that, compared to other organizations, it has devoted itself fundamentally to educational enterprises, to the study and to the understanding of sound educational procedures."

Enlarged Scope of Activities

NEARLY fifty years have passed since the first meeting of the National Congress of Mothers. They faced the problems of home and family education as they existed in their day. They were the tasks of feeding, clothing, and housing the family, of providing physical, mental, and spiritual training for their children. It is inevitable that these tasks should have varied with the years in method and presentation, though the purpose remained the same.

The problems of home and family education are the same today. The National Congress is still vitally concerned with the preparation of parents to meet the problems of feeding, clothing, housing, and training their children. But nearly two generations of thought and experience lie between the solutions of those early years and the answers of now.

The problem of today is no longer how to make the individual home alone capable of yielding the richest and most satisfying experiences but

rather how to build a society which makes possible a satisfactory home environment for all children. The problem of today is no longer "What shall I feed my child?" but rather, "How shall the children of the world be fed, clothed, and housed?"

This brief presentation cannot do justice to the immense scope of the parent-teacher organization's responsibilities and activities in the field of education for homemaking and family life; and yet it clearly shows that from the year of its creation the parent-teacher organization has worked vigorously to promote study and activity in the field of education for family living and parenthood. The development of healthy, happy, and well-adjusted citizens who shall help to build a better world in which to live is after all the fundamental and abiding purpose in any program in any age.

Making Parenthood a Profession

A SEARCH through the records of the early years of parent-teacher effort brings to light not a single mention of parent education. But one's failure to find it is like the failure of the little girl in the geography class who simply could not find the Sahara Desert in Northern Africa where it was supposed to be. It was so big it was all over the place; and the letters were so widely spaced that to the child they did not appear as belonging to a single word.

This is not to say that the field of parent education is as arid as the Sahara. It is to say that in the thought and activity of parent-teacher pioneers parent education was literally "all over the place." The inspiration that led to the convening of the First National Congress of Mothers came from individual mothers' ardent desire that all the children of all the people might enjoy the thoughtful, well-guided care that their own were privileged to receive. And the method chosen was that of education.

It might have been otherwise. The same inspiration might have led to a concerted movement for economic reform, a political drive directed at the cause of the poverty which is responsible for much of child neglect. No doubt the Founders and their associates were well aware, as are parents today, that a good deal of malnutrition can be traced to the maldistribution of wealth! But they chose to attack, not the social system, but the ignorance—or rather, "uninformedness"—of mothers. These were the days when the teaching of domestic science in the schools (now more broadly and agreeably termed home economics) was something to campaign for, not an accepted feature of the curriculum. There was no Children's Bureau in Washington to which any mother in the United States could send for free information concerning the feeding and care of her children. Nor did a

mother find columns of free expert advice in the daily papers and magazines, and an abundance of books on the subject available at the public library. As for sitting calmly at some home task or even bustling about with her industrious broom and meanwhile hearing the voice of a responsible person telling her from a distant radio station what to do about baby's cough or what to put into the children's lunch box, that was beyond the dream of the best informed. But it was not beyond the dream of the pioneers that every known method by which mothers might be aided in giving intelligent care to their children should be employed in their behalf.

To this end, there was, first of all, an active campaign for the organization of mothers' clubs or circles all over the country. Mothers were to share what they knew—to lend one another books and give one another in informal chat the bits of wisdom they had gleaned from hither and yon. They were to hear well-informed speakers. And just as rapidly as possible they were to build an organization which would by its own resources provide new materials for the guidance of mothers, and which could speak with one voice in the name of united motherhood whenever occasion should arise.

The field was indeed wide, like the Sahara. But unlike the Sahara, it was exceedingly fertile. Mothers were ready for the idea, and the movement flourished from the beginning as one of education rather than reform. The word "education" may not appear in committee lists, but the educational motive was taken for granted. The Literature committee, perhaps the first of what we today call subject committees, was concerned with providing suitable reading matter for the education of mothers. At a later stage its activities were carried on under two headings, "Book Lists for Mothers" and "Book Lists for Children," stress being laid on promoting material written by experts but designed for general use.

Says a report presented to the 1910 Board meeting: "There is a crying need for simple, practical loan papers to be sent to little clubs of mothers who have had few opportunities and who could not appreciate the technically worded paper. Such a request came from a worker in a logging camp in Texas, another from Alabama, while a mother in San Francisco wrote at length of the needs of her group of mothers for further instruction along simple child-study lines." Those who are familiar with Congress history know that these papers were provided and circulated with no little expenditure of money and effort—convincing evidence that the flood of free literature for the enlightenment of the homemaker had not yet swept over the country.

That these efforts at improving the lot of childhood should have been mother education rather than parent education is not surprising. The

Founders of what is now the parent-teacher organization thought in terms of young children. They were deeply impressed, and rightly so, with the importance of the so-called formative years in child development, years in which the child is comparatively helpless and at the mercy of those who brought him into a baffling world. There is no denying the fact that in this period of the child's life the decisive influence is that of the mother, who normally is present during all the child's waking hours, as few fathers are. Further, while at the turn of the century fathers were occupied as they are today with business and political concerns, mothers were for the most part in the home and not overwhelmed with bids for their time and effort from a multitude of organizations and social activities. To their satisfaction the Congress of Mothers provided a program which enlisted their interest and gave them an outlet for energies which they were happy to use for the promotion of the welfare of children everywhere. It was, distinctly, a program of, by, and for mothers.

But it is equally natural that as the organization found its place assured in the scheme of American community living the program widened. In 1904 the Congress launched a campaign for the organization of parent-teacher associations to secure mother influence in the schools. This was the beginning of a definite parent education movement and, as has been said in one historical account, "parent education now became a term which could be used with impunity even though from the first it was the great goal from which the movement started." Four years after that the Congress of Mothers became the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations. The need for close cooperation between home and school had become apparent, and had been definitely met by an organization national in scope. And paralleling the effort that was made in teacher training institutions to prepare young women for the tasks of the schoolroom there was at least the encouraging beginning of a movement to train parents for parenthood.

Progress Spurred by Congress Publications

THE progress of that movement has been notable. In the early days it was almost entirely a study of the nature, growth, and development of the child—a study which is still necessary in any program of parent education. But the experiences of individual parents gained through passing years; the contributions of science and research; the discovery of new interests and responsibilities in the fields of commerce, of recreation, of social science, of politics and community life, of economics and transportation; the new challenges and demands of a rapidly changing social order—all these broad-

ened the scope and deepened the purpose of parent education. In the National Congress it became a consideration of major importance to meet wisely and adequately the questions and needs of state groups, and through the state groups, of the local associations as they endeavored to build an educated parenthood.

Throughout the course of this development the official magazine of the Congress together with the Congress publications has played a part of increasing significance. While a survey of convention themes and convention programs leaves no possible doubt that parent education was of paramount interest to parent-teacher people, and that much inspiration came from these sources, it was the steady publication of materials which sustained interest and led to effective organization of parents for the purpose of self-improvement in the field of their major interest.

These materials stimulated the formation of study circles and discussion groups. They kept the membership in constant touch with all phases of developing programs in parent education. They dealt with the parents' specific problems in child training, including aspects of health, behavior problems, personality traits, habits, the finer appreciation of literature and music, and the newer trends in school procedure. They were concerned with the broader problems of the home, of marriage, the child's inheritance, and the socio-economic factors affecting the youth and his environment.

The entire parent education program was tremendously enriched by the achievements in the field of research which were currently being carried on in many institutions throughout the country. The results of these studies were made available to parent-teacher members through specially prepared study material.

For seven years the National Congress was privileged to undertake and carry on a special project in parent education under the guidance and direction of specialists—made possible through the generous confidence of those who believed in the worth of the movement and in its ultimate possibilities. The purpose of this parent education program was to develop within each state the resources of that state; to work for the coordination of all organizations within the state in their own councils, communities, or bureaus; and to give to these state and local units such services as would bring them in close contact with the educational organizations and institutions concerned with parent education within the city and state in which they lived.

It was not the aim of the Congress to crystallize a movement or to set up any one program to be followed by all its units—local, state, and national. It was realized that every locality had its own situation to meet and that

the best program could be built on the needs and resources of the individual communities themselves. With this in mind the Congress did not aim to initiate a national program of parent education rivaling other programs carried on by professional groups, but rather it strove to cooperate with other organizations already in this field and to build upon Congress programs already in existence.

Today, the National Congress offers its program of parent education—not longer a project set apart—but a program which is manifest in every phase of every proper activity undertaken under parent-teacher auspices. The study groups, with their wide range of interest and topic; the activity which unites home and school in constructive contribution to happy, wholesome childhood and youth; the efforts of countless parent-teacher associations to provide communities where the next generation may grow up safely and happily, and themselves become the finest parents the world has yet known—all these are the outcome of a program of parent education which now permeates and motivates all our parent-teacher work.

Recreation, an Educational Problem

IT was not long ago that many people thought of play as something harmful. They argued that “an idle brain is the devil’s workshop” and “Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do.” They seemed to overlook the possibility of offering training in the use of leisure so that the “idle” brain and hands might find employment in something really constructive, or fill the hours with genuinely helpful activities because genuinely enjoyable. In one school, as late as 1872, the rules for the governing of students included these statements:

“The students shall be indulged with nothing that the world calls play; let this be observed with strictest nicety; for those who play when they are young will play when they are old.”

These peculiar ideas are not difficult to understand. The long working day was common fifty years ago; father spent all the daylight hours—and more—in attending to his duties as wage earner in the workshop or the store or on the farm; and mother, unblessed with electric servants and labor-saving gadgets, went him one better, or maybe two or three! It was hardly fitting then that the children should be doing nothing in particular. In those days there was, naturally enough, little or no place for family recreation. In a time when there was little or no opportunity for family recreation, it is quite obvious that there would be even less opportunity for group or community recreation.

Although the pioneers who founded and guided the National Congress

of Mothers were amazingly alert to the needs of childhood, it took the Congress over ten years to give leisure and recreation a respectable place in its scheme of work. It took the Congress ten years at least to realize fully that recreation should be rightly considered an educational problem and that it could be so handled as to contribute to the general welfare. Thus, while it cannot be said that the Congress was the trail blazer for this wholesome activity, it is apparent that it did not play the laggard's part. In 1907 there were in all the United States only ninety cities that conducted playgrounds for children. That this number grew by leaps and bounds in the period immediately following is due in large measure to the playground movement which received its essential support from organizations with more inclusive aims, pre-eminent among them the National Congress of Mothers.

Committees on Playgrounds

IT was at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Congress in 1908 that the motion was carried which created a committee on playgrounds. The national committee was to consist of members appointed by state presidents, one member for each state. It was also recommended that every Mother's Circle have a committee on playgrounds charged with the duty of seeing that the children in its vicinity had room to play. The report submitted two years later showed that a sound philosophy underlay the program that was slowly taking form. Playgrounds were to be promoted in recognition of the value of play for rich and poor alike. Not alone for the alleviation of the miseries of the underprivileged in the slum areas, but for the education of all children everywhere were they to be established.

The report also asked this question: "Can the mothers of the country direct their energies for the benefit of their children in any better way than to promote a movement which not only safeguards their children during the hours of play, but actually directs their play in such a manner as to make them better and stronger men and women?" Plainly, this committee regarded itself as engaged in a work of education.

Nor was the work of the committee limited to making playgrounds grow where none had grown before—for example, on the roofs of buildings in congested areas. One of its earliest interests became the opening of school-houses for the use of the community, with the idea of providing interesting, instructive, and wholesome entertainment for all. This concern for centers for recreation expressed itself in the creation of a special department devoted to the establishment of such centers. And as the Congress grew older and extended its activities to include older children there came into being a committee on Dress, Chaperonage, and Recreation. Probably this com-

mittee considered such weighty matters as low and high heels, proper dress for classroom wear, the frantically late hour of eleven o'clock for young people to return home, and other questions which helped young people to understand themselves and to improve their personalities. This committee was soon replaced by a committee on Recreation and Social Standards, and this single committee in turn soon became two separate ones. But the purpose was more constant than the name. It was to control, in whatever measure possible, the influences affecting the intellectual and moral life of school boys and girls.

The motion picture problem, which looms so large on today's horizon and which now is one of the responsibilities of a national committee, was among the first to be considered when the committee on playgrounds swung into action in 1910. A resolution of that year first took note of the fact that moving picture shows and vaudeville performances, "which under certain restrictions may be made a powerful educational factor," had become demoralizing to children and young people. The resolution then called upon local organizations of mothers to combat these influences for evil through cooperation in a program of censorship and supervision. While this early method of attacking the problem has given way to the newer techniques of today, it is significant that the problem was recognized at its very outset and courageously attacked. If it has not yet been completely solved it is not for lack of continuous effort. Here was a perennial that proved to be hardy to an extraordinary degree.

Meeting the Challenge of Increased Leisure

AS industrial and social changes began to invade society, tremendous amounts of leisure were created. Whereas the frontiersmen of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in America were confronted with manual labor which had to be done as the price of survival, machines were now to be had which emancipated men and women from much of the drudgery which was taken for granted years ago. For the first time in history there was a promise of real leisure. Working days were shorter; fewer children were required to make any substantial contribution to the maintenance of the home; and the school began to stress extracurricular activities. Under these conditions there was room—moreover there was need—for a many-sided program in which home, school, and community could cooperate for the good of all.

As the new day of increased leisure became more general the problem of its wise use became more acute and led to a new conception of the role of recreation in the building of the total human personality. Both young people and adults learned to "discriminate between the enjoyments that en-

rich and enlarge their lives and those which degrade and dissipate." Thus came into being modern American recreation with its multiplicity of cultural arts, hobbies, activities, and diversities. In this new development the National Congress of Parents and Teachers played a leading part.

Through the years, again and again, records show the theme to be recreation. Leisure-time activities, play, hobbies—all that is known as recreation found place and importance in the parent-teacher program. The organization came into being at a time when communities were not planned for good living for children and youth; when crowding and slums were all too often the characteristics of our cities, and when the drab and ugly frequently were marks of the village and the country crossroads. First discovering the need of every child for adequate expression through play, through outdoor activities, through creative projects of his own choosing, the membership of the parent-teacher organization proceeded to make possible an environment where children and youth could find opportunity for enjoying their birthright of play.

Playgrounds, parks, swimming pools, bathing beaches, recreation centers, golf courses, tennis courts, picnic groves—these occupied the attention of many a parent-teacher association. Later interests included the promotion and maintenance of bands, orchestras, choruses, choral groups, and music clubs of all kinds. Attention was turned to the home, and parent-teacher members became greatly interested in home and family fun.

Recreation—the wise and happy use of leisure—has permeated parent-teacher work as it touches the experience of the individual, as it shapes the life of the home, and as it builds society. Today, when groups in general, and parent-teacher associations in particular, are conscious of their responsibility to society as a whole, the recreation program of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers renews and intensifies every emphasis made through the years.

Its greatest service perhaps is in creating public opinion to achieve two objectives. *First*, the conserving, maintaining, and developing of natural recreational resources. The fields and lakes and mountains, the seashore and the forests, as well as the open grassy plots and the breathing places of our great cities—these belong by right to us and our children. *Second*, the making available of these and other resources through free opportunity to experience these activities; a knowledge of the skills necessary; the provision of adequate leadership in our communities; and the development of happy and wholesome attitudes toward recreation. No program in the entire field of parent-teacher endeavor has in larger measure included and unified the interests of all national committees and the support of all groups, than has this all-inclusive program of recreation.

Social Hygiene, a New Issue

NOT so many thousands of yesterdays ago that most parents and teachers have forgotten them, social hygiene was a term shrouded in mystery. It had to do with things that lurked in dark recesses and forbidden places. It awaited a Moses to lead it out of the wilderness and give it an honorable place in man's thinking. Contrast this with the situation we have today, when almost any discussion of social hygiene indicates at once how far contemporary thought has been enlightened concerning the essentials of sex education. Yet it took social hygiene more than two decades to justify its position as one of the important sciences of human behavior. It is clear that today social hygiene is here to stay, with a body of knowledge no longer considered grotesque but accepted by people everywhere who are interested in producing healthy and vigorous youth.

The story of social hygiene is indeed one of growth and development in American thought. Anyone past forty—and a good many younger people as well—remembers a time when “what a young girl ought to know” was zealously kept from her by a conspiracy of solicitous adults, the superior wisdom of older playmates, and the hampering of publishers. Today a good deal that she should not know, because it is untrue or only partly true, is thrust upon her as soon as she is old enough to read a book or see a movie. Neither situation can be thought of as desirable. Both are full of dangerous possibilities. It is the concern of social hygiene that the period of physical growth be a period of equally natural, balanced growth in social knowledge, in which nothing shall be lost which a hush-hush society tried to preserve and much be gained that our grandmothers would not have thought possible.

Advanced Attitude of the First National Congress

IT is therefore all the more remarkable that the mothers who gathered together at the First National Congress of Mothers realized the importance of sex adjustment in successful marriage and family life, that they had the courage and the vision to enter as pioneers into this silent area of human relationships. Nearly fifty years ago these mothers devoted time and attention to addresses on such subjects as Reproduction and Natural Law and Moral Responsibility of Women in Heredity. In these addresses speakers advocated control of reproduction and wise selection to eliminate those stocks which are a burden to society and which hinder civilization.

The day will come when the rights of the child to be well born will be recognized and respected. In that day the “defective” will demand the

reason for his puny limbs, impaired mind, misshapen spine, pain-racked body—a life of suffering with blasted hopes—and the world will not condone or palliate the cruelty and crime committed against the unfortunate child, deprived of its birthright, on the old plea of ignorance or the pretense that God willed a defective should be born—a pretense that is contradicted by every law, human and divine.

Looking toward such a day, the mothers who assembled in 1897 imposed upon themselves tasks which in no degree were light or easy to fulfill. They demanded of themselves all the best qualities—qualities which called for the highest intelligence as well as the finest emotional and moral aptitudes thought of as essential to womanhood, maternity, and family life.

Knowledge is indeed power, and ignorance is ever and always the twin brother of vice. Therefore, no matter what profession falls to the lot of, or is chosen by, a woman, the first, the most important, the absolutely vital need for her is a broad, solid, true, and comprehensive grasp upon the facts of life as life is today and has been in the past. This alone will enable her to lay a firm foundation for the future. . . . With the present knowledge of heredity, with woman's enlarged opportunity and broadened education, she who permits herself to become a mother without first having demanded and obtained her own freedom from sex domination and fair and free conditions of development for herself and child will commit a crime against herself, against her child, and against mankind.

On such an inheritance of social conscience and ideals, the parent-teacher association began a work which, if not actually labeled social hygiene at the time, was of such nature and scope as later to render possible a social hygiene program.

Early Promotion of Social Hygiene

THE rapid and continuous development of this field of education in the years that followed is readily traced. In 1913 the social hygiene agencies made their appearance, and it was with these groups that the parent-teacher organization was to cooperate for many years. This was the beginning of organized social hygiene programs in leading national associations interested in child study, parent education, and homemaking. The term "social hygiene" was defined to include those health and welfare problems which have a direct or indirect origin in sex and which concern the family accepted as the basic unit of society.

In the five or six years following, the theory that sex education is an essential part of education for family and social relationships was more

clearly formulated and widely accepted. Contemporary events occasioned a particular demand that the ideals of monogamous marriage be upheld. This was strongly stressed in the interest of what was aptly called "racial health" as well as in behalf of the spiritual health of the individual. The annual convention of 1920 spread upon its minutes a resolution "that we pledge cooperation to the Government and other agencies in extending to parents information which will enable them to give instruction to their children in the principles of pure living." Nor did the Congress confine its activities in the field of sex education to the endorsing of resolutions. An active Racial Health committee promoted study groups; scrutinized the books which were issuing from the press in increasing numbers, and made recommendations; urged parent-teacher associations to "house-clean" local libraries by way of improving the fare offered freely to the public; and encouraged the study of community conditions with an eye to improving the environment for young people in particular. Parents and teachers were especially warned of the dangers lurking in obscene "literature."

At the twenty-fifth annual convention of the National Congress in 1921, it was resolved that:

WHEREAS, Immorality and venereal disease are destructive of family life and racial health, and

WHEREAS, The United States Government has established a Board through which Federal funds have been expended for the promotion of research and education in social hygiene, protection of soldiers, sailors, and civilian population from venereal disease and protective social measures,

Be It Resolved, That the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations in Twenty-fifth Annual Convention assembled, urge the United States Congress, in special session assembled, to appropriate adequate funds for the purposes named in the Chamberlain-Kahn Act, and for the administration of the United States Interdepartmental Social Hygiene Board.

Another resolution bearing upon this subject adopted by the National Congress declared that:

WHEREAS, It is the consensus of public opinion that the present modes of women's apparel tend to lower the moral standards of our young men and women, and

WHEREAS, It is extremely difficult to persuade the feminine mind to disregard the styles as set forth in fashion books and uniformly followed by the manufacturers of ready-to-wear garments, therefore,

Be It Resolved, That the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations petition the Board of Fashions to adopt styles which will not only present grace and simplicity but shall also encourage modesty and dignity.

Following these resolutions, it was moved by the Executive Committee that the Department of Maternity Care be changed to the Department of Racial Health; and that the Department of Marriage Sanctity be changed to a committee to be called Monogamous Marriage and placed under the Department of Racial Health. This committee stated its aims as follows: "To promote among parents and teachers better understanding of principles and methods for training the young in high ideals concerning the fundamentals of love, home, and parenthood under the general subject of social hygiene."

Today's Point of View

IN 1924, at a convention which gave evidence in its program of marked interest in social hygiene problems, the name of the committee on Racial Health was changed to that it wears today, the committee on Social Hygiene. In this connection it is interesting to note that the question of careers for women was raised. It was declared that there was no reason why a girl can't have an education equivalent to a man's and yet marry. "They should take up some line of endeavor, and one which will render the maximum of service to the world wherever they can."

A new point of view regarding social hygiene grew out of this convention. An inspired speaker in his defense of the modern generation supposedly headed straight for perdition, made this statement: "The crux of the problem is just that modern young people require scientific direction which can be supplied in great measure by the parent-teacher group." It was to supply this scientific direction that the National Congress developed a plan of work to meet its responsibility in the field of social hygiene:

To offer social hygiene information to parents and teachers so that they may help guide children under their care in those life situations in which sex is a factor.

To help parents and teachers meet boy-girl problems, especially those of adolescence, and to set standards and ideals for young people.

To secure the cooperation of parents with the school in including appropriate materials in school courses and with communities in providing a wholesome social environment for children.

In furthering these aims special phases of the program were to be considered for study and action:

Answering the child's early questions about life origins.

Dealing with the child who does not ask questions.

Teaching the young child about the home and the family.

Directing the child's emotional expression.

Presenting reproduction and growth through nature study.

Helping the child get along with people, particularly the other sex.

Promoting the inclusion of sex education in school courses.

Providing opportunities for youth to learn the essentials of preparation for marriage.

Cooperating with the community agencies in the guidance of boy-girl conduct.

Discovering what the community furnishes to boys and girls in wholesome and appealing outlets for creative energy.

Establishing desirable sex-social codes in the community.

Helping the community in dealing with its social hygiene problems.

Such an educational program cannot be confused with the earlier narrow instruction in physiological facts which it was hoped would lead children by some magic to satisfactory conduct. It presented instead a program planned to develop in the child habits of self-control and fair play, taste for the best in boy-girl conduct; to give to him standards that would help him meet challenging sex situations and high ideals of love in a home partnership. Such an educational program is broad enough in scope and high enough in purpose to be a challenge to every parent and teacher. It affords countless opportunities to make use of the best in modern thought and in educational methods.

So today parent-teacher interest in the broad field of social hygiene lies particularly in those aspects which relate to the wholesome and happy life of our boys and girls. The program is both direct and simple—it deals largely with the problems which arise in connection with boy-girl relationships, with providing a wholesome environment for boys and girls to grow up in together, with preparing them for a fine and happy experience in courtship and marriage, with enabling them to pass on to the next generation the benefits of healthy, untainted bodies and minds.

The approach to the program is twofold. First, the stimulation of the active participation of the home in meeting its responsibility for guidance both by instruction and by example. Second, the utilization of all efforts on the part of other organizations cooperating with the home and school—the religious and character-building agencies in the community—in an

inclusive community-wide program to establish and maintain those community standards which result in the building of the lives of boys and girls, men and women—lives which are physically healthy, mentally wholesome, spiritually fine.

Protection of the Child

THE desire to protect children, like the desire for knowledge and truth, exists today as one of the major values in human life. It is one of the most natural and arresting of human endeavors. Yet it was but a little over a century ago that children were hanged for the flagrant offense of stealing a loaf of bread. Horrible, yet more merciful, it may be, than was the living torture to which thousands of children throughout the world were condemned.

In England, even during the latter part of the eighteenth century, mill-owners would harness four-year-old children, dog-fashion, to a small truck and force them to drag coal on their hands and knees through passages too small to admit the body of a man. Young boys were apprenticed to stoke fires in blast furnaces, their weary bodies driven in the blinding heat from early morning until late at night, every morning, every night. In the United States, as late as 1870, young boys were working from ten to fourteen hours a day as mill hands and at other jobs which would have been difficult for adults to perform. Enlightened treatment of children! Strangely enough, such deplorable conditions were justified on the grounds that this labor prevented children from the "dangers of falling into vice and crime."

"Age of the Child"

TODAY it is difficult to conceive of a society characterized by such conditions, for when this half century is past and our nation comes to recount its humanistic endeavors during that time, heading the list will be the development of the age described as the "Age of the Child," a development regarded by intelligent men and women as the truest index of civilization. And inspiring to parents and teachers will be the knowledge that the parent-teacher association helped to bring about this age by awakening interest in the child and his role in the drama of human progress.

As far back as 1903, six years after the National Congress of Mothers came into being, it was found advisable to form within the organization a committee on Juvenile Court and Probation to supervise the work for delinquent, defective, and dependent children. At a board meeting of that same year it was resolved "that regular courses of instruction should be

provided for the training of probation officers and all persons who are to be placed in charge of dependent and delinquent children."

A list of the subjects discussed at the annual convention reveals the early concern of the organization for children growing up amid poverty, vice, and disease: National Boy Problems, Industrial Education a Factor in Civic Betterment, Child Labor Conditions, the Probation Method, and The Dependent and Delinquent Children. It is clearly evident that although the Congress did not initiate the juvenile court and probation system, the leaders saw its advantages and for years devoted their energies to establishing the system in this and other lands.

While the Congress was doing this much needed work of promotion, it was at the same time directing the attention of home, school, and community to the predisposing factors of juvenile delinquency. It is noteworthy that this insight into behavior problems came at a time when the study was still in its infancy, and still to be recognized as the basis of a profession requiring the services of trained experts.

Attacking the Problem of Child Labor

DUE to the persistent efforts of the National Congress, parents were already aware of the physical and economic perils connected with some forms of child labor; and, most important, adults were beginning to accept and to appreciate the point of view which regarded the child as a child and not as a miniature adult. Teachers who by this time had united their forces with that of the Mothers' Congress were revising their educational methods and theories with a view to developing a more intelligent understanding of the child. The following resolution adopted at the 1915 convention discloses the change in emphasis produced by a clearer insight into child nature:

WHEREAS, The basis of efficiency in probation work necessitates that it be recognized as education of the inner life, and

WHEREAS, Such service can only be rendered by those who understand how to lead children,

Be It Resolved, That the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations use its influence to have the probation work for children recognized as part of the educational work of the state and placed under educational guidance.

Pertaining specifically to child labor which at this time was the work of a special committee of the Congress, the following resolutions were passed in 1915:

WHEREAS, The National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations, for the protection of childhood, has worked and will work unceasingly to prevent the employment of children in occupations that are injurious to health, life, and character; and

WHEREAS, Experience proves that prevention of opportunity for any work is equally detrimental to the welfare of children and to their future as adults; and

WHEREAS, Parents, the natural guardians of children, must be given some discretion as to what is for the well-being of the child;

Be It Resolved, That the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations asserts its belief that protection of the best interest of children requires that child labor legislation should be based on the following principles:

1. Prevention of employment in occupations injurious to health or character.

2. Liberty for employment in suitable occupations.

3. Employment certificates for children to be given by educational authority of the district, after certificate is given from physician as to the child's physical and mental ability for the work contemplated.

4. Special employment certificates for children permitting suitable occupations during vacation and out-of-school hours.

5. Working hours for children permitted by the law to leave school and go to work to conform with the working hours of such state, as otherwise their opportunities are limited.

Preventive Attitude Toward Delinquency

IN 1916, in a declaration of principles regarding treatment of wayward children by school and state the National Congress reiterates its previous statement of belief that the only way to check crime lies in the universal, systematized, sympathetic, individual treatment of every erring child. The following statement is made concerning the treatment of juvenile delinquency:

Therefore, *Be It Resolved*, By the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations:

First, that the schools should be prepared to assist every wayward child, not by expelling him or placing him in an institution, but by removing the cause of truancy.

Second, that a state probation commission in each state should be associated with the Department of Public Instruction in order to promote efficiency and uniformity in probation work.

Third, that whenever it becomes necessary to remove a child from his own home, he should be cared for by the Cottage System of home schools, instead of in large reform institutions, where individual attention and home influences are necessarily lacking.

Fourth, that a study of Froebel's philosophy is a valuable equipment for parents, teachers, probation officers, and all who are meeting the problems of wayward children.

Fifth, that all industrial and reform schools be placed under state educational supervision.

These simple declarations reveal, better perhaps than anything else could, the parent-teacher point of view concerning juvenile delinquency, its treatment and prevention. They show too a growing insight into the responsibility of parents and public for the child as well as the important role of education in crime prevention.

It was during this period that the National Congress enlisted in another important campaign—a nation-wide movement for a Mothers' Pension Law in every state. This movement was an outgrowth of the belief held by parent-teacher members that to deny children a mother's care because of poverty, or illness, or death of the father, is a gross injustice to the child and to the state as well.

Two important developments were taking place during these years: first, the attempt scientifically to understand the basis of youth's conduct deviations; second, in the light of such understanding, the effort to remold the factors in home, school, and community which contribute to youthful delinquency. Emphasis was gradually shifting from juvenile treatment to juvenile protection, and by 1922 the committee on Juvenile Court and Probation was changed to Juvenile Protection. It was with thoughts as wide and progressive as these that the Congress entered upon a new phase of its program.

The Child's "Total Environment"

IT was inevitable that parent-teacher attention in this field of endeavor should have centered first of all upon the parents' responsibility in the home—all the problems of knowing the child, of maintaining right attitudes toward him, and of courageously meeting situations involving juvenile delinquency. The second point of emphasis made by the Congress involved

cooperation with the school, since it was recognized that social conflicts are more easily detected in the school situation than elsewhere. The Congress worked with schools in an effort to provide enough workers properly qualified by training and experience to deal intelligently with the problems of so-called "problem" children and juvenile offenders. The third area of interest consisted of cooperation in the program and activities of existing agencies in the community concerned with the protection and care of children. Special phases of this community interest include these preventive measures:

1. Laws and ordinances for the protection and care of children.
2. Child guidance clinic facilities.
3. Enforcement of existing statutes concerning child labor.
4. Standards in institutions for the care of socially handicapped children.
5. Placement methods of caring for dependent and neglected children.
6. Community hazards from which children and youth need protection, such as petty gambling, destructive recreational influences, roadhouses and cabarets, salacious literature, etc.
7. Adequate playgrounds and social centers, boys' and girls' clubs, and library facilities.

Thus, through the years, the National Congress has consistently demonstrated its unwavering concern for the protection and care of childhood. The child has come into his own. This is indeed the age of the child. Child labor has not been everywhere abolished, it is true. There are still delinquent children, and some of them are dealt with in courts and prisons where they should not be. Dependent children are not adequately cared for. But, as never before in history, society has grown child-conscious. It no longer condones its own sins, or denies the right of the child to freedom for growth and play and wholesome maturing. This change in attitude is something parents and teachers have helped to bring about. The maintaining of this desirable attitude entails a growing appreciation of the significance of the total environment and demands the development of an educational program that will ultimately include all the agencies of society, uniting in the effort toward more wholesome social adjustment of the children of tomorrow.

A New Force in Education

IN this country it was decided long, long ago that the chief instrument of education, so far as the public was concerned, should be a common school, one open to all the children of all the people. "This institution," cried Horace Mann, the founder of the public school system, "is the greatest

discovery ever made by man! . . . In its universality, the school is capacious enough to receive and cherish in its parental bosom every child that comes into the world. . . . Let the common school be expanded to its capabilities, let it be worked with the efficiency of which it is susceptible, and nine-tenths of the crimes in the penal code will become obsolete; the long catalogue of human ills will be abridged; men will walk more safely by day; every pillow will be more inviolable by night; all rational hopes respecting the future will be brightened."

Two generations later Alice McLellan Birney, the founder of the National Congress of Mothers, addressed a great audience with these words: "How strangely the world has worked! For every kindergarten there are a hundred, nay, a thousand prisons, jails, reformatories, asylums, and hospitals. Are we blind that we fail to recognize the fact that such demand will never cease until we cut off the supply? Does it not behoove us to work with a will and together, that the little ones of today may not require such training as civilization offers through police and courts of law in place of the kindergarten schools."

Increased Interest of Parents

THE activities of the early parent-teacher leaders dealt with kindergarten rather than schools in general. This was natural. A better day for the child was to be ushered in by better mothers; and this was especially true of mothers of young children. The first notable efforts to bring together large groups of mothers in convention were made in cooperation with kindergarten leaders who were among the first to sense the meaning and value of the new movement and give it their support.

But before long mothers enlarged their interest to include the concerns of the school-age child. They found that to have an effective program they must recognize all the educative forces in the life of the child, particularly the public school. Mothers who before this time had accepted whatever the public school had to offer, ready to yield their responsibility for school-age children to a supposedly trained teacher for a few hours each day, now began to ask questions. At least many of them did! Some who did not were the target of a speaker, a member of the board of education of a large city, who at the third annual convention spoke her mind thus: "If American education lags behind it is to be traced to the ignorance and indifference of parents. Parents are of necessity ignorant of educational methods. When their children begin to go to school the parents are themselves a quarter of a century behind. Of this they seem never to be conscious. On the contrary, they are cocksure they understand the whole subject of education

even though a conscientious teacher, after years of study, feels that it is almost too great for mortal ken. They toss it off as something they have come by naturally, by virtue of once having been children themselves and now having children of their own. They really see little reason for giving the matter much attention, and if you would witness an audience openly and thoroughly bored, open up before a chance lot of parents some educational topic."

Parent-Teacher Cooperation

FORTUNATELY this state of affairs did not prevail everywhere. There must have been some consciousness of the importance of schools as well as of homes, for this aim, among others, was written into the first charter of the organization, granted in 1900: "To bring into closer relation the home and the school that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the training of the child." Moreover, at an executive meeting in the following year an outline of duties for the Education committee was adopted, which looked toward the organization of parents' auxiliaries in public schools. Five years later still the parent-teacher circles, as they were then called, were so important a part of the National Congress of Mothers that the structure of the organization was modified to include them as a new department. The spirit that had brought about a national organization of mothers was something that had surge and lift to it.

By 1908, when the Congress was but eleven years old, the active cooperation of parents and teachers had become such an important feature of the nation-wide program that the name of the organization was changed, in response to popular demand, and it became the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations. A report of the parent-teacher committee for 1909-1910 tells of "remarkable activity in that work which is the distinctive work of the Congress of Mothers, namely the promotion of Mothers' Circles and of parent-teacher associations in connection with the schools." The chairman recommended the appointment of county organizers who would hold at least one conference a year and this, if possible, in connection with the county teachers' institute.

One of the activities reported is the opening of schoolhouses as social centers for the people, providing interesting, instructive, and wholesome entertainment for all. The Parent-Teacher committee, it appears, was charged with the responsibility of organizing and promoting parent-teacher groups. A coexisting committee on Education headed by a well-known educator guided the program. A suggestion as to the kind of cooperation that was thought feasible is contained in a recommendation of the Education committee that an investigation be undertaken "to find out in an accurate

and complete way whether the present methods of educating girls in the high schools and in the colleges is accomplishing the desired results, in making women more effective in the lives they must live, and more content in the work they must do."

Other types of cooperation brought the parents directly into the school, though the best methods of bringing the home and school closer together were as yet seldom practiced and still less understood. Thus the activities of some associations gave educators the idea that the association's main objective was to operate the schools—not to cooperate with them. For some years the chief activities centered around providing equipment for the schools. All sorts of entertainment were given to raise money for all sorts of things which the schools were supposed to stand in need of: pictures, victrolas, pianos, drinking fountains, playground equipment, furnishings for teachers' rest rooms, and even screens for the windows. These activities were followed by others which placed emphasis on philanthropy and material assistance. The school lunch, milk for the undernourished, tennis courts, playgrounds, the school library, instruction in music, school orchestras, the school nurse, the visiting teacher—all were inaugurated, financed, and carried on by the parent-teacher association as a regular part of the school program.

The Need for Organized Effort

MEANTIME, in line with a new organization plan adopted in 1921, Education became a department coordinate with Homemaking, Organization, Legislation, and Program Service. Under the department of Education was placed, as the chief committee, School Education. Later the departmental plan was abandoned, but the standing committee on School Education remained to keep the organization informed of the new movements in education and the new opportunities for cooperation.

The activities of the committee on School Education filled this need of which parents were becoming conscious, precisely as did the Congress of Mothers with its early emphasis on the care of young children and the encouragement of kindergartens. The American public school system was becoming an enormously complex affair. The vast increase in knowledge made it imperative that specialization take place. The language and methods of these specialists were not always immediately intelligible to the layman parent and frequently called for interpretation. For instance, children have always had intelligence, but only within the last decade or two have they had "intelligence quotients." They have always been potential job holders, but only in recent years have the schools provided vocational guidance under that name. Home study, once thought an indis-

pensable part of the school program, is now a debatable subject; the general home conditions once thought to be very much the parents' own affair have come to be a legitimate concern of the schools. The curriculum is a changed affair and constantly goes on changing under the constant impact of public opinion.

P.T.A. Responsibility

THE feeling of bewilderment with which newer educational systems were viewed was not confined to parents alone. Within the schools, as without, there had long been felt the need of a consistent simplifying philosophy—a clear statement of goals to be achieved. In 1918, after years of study, educators published the seven cardinal objectives of education. In 1927 these objectives were given a permanent place in the program of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers.

More recently still the Congress has accepted and incorporated into its program the current statement of the purposes of education in American democracy. The responsibility of the parent-teacher association in the field of school education today is planned to bring about increased understanding, appreciation, and support of public education on the part of all parents. This responsibility is summed up in the following statements:

To study the educational program of the city or county and state, its needs and its facilities for offering equality of educational opportunity for all children.

To work consistently for constructive school legislation.

To keep the schools free to teach the truth.

To know the school: the physical plant, the equipment, and supplies; its curriculum and program of activities and how they function in the life of the child.

To know the teachers personally; and to cooperate in every possible way to help secure for every school a well-qualified teacher and for every teacher an adequate salary.

To know how the home can assist and supplement the teachings of the school; and how parents and teachers may cooperate to the best advantage of the child.

Aggressively to support through the continuous development of an informed public opinion the public school system; to keep in close touch with the local school administration and understand its problems; to secure adequate financial support for the schools; and to support efforts to inform the public concerning educational methods and practices.

America Becomes Health-Conscious

ALITTLE over twenty-five years ago, when a nation-wide call to arms was sounded, an alarmingly large number of those who responded were found physically unfit for service. Suddenly this country became health-conscious. Americans, having been schooled to think of themselves as a rugged and vigorous people who enjoyed a considerable legacy from their hardy pioneer forefathers, not only were surprised, but also were sufficiently shocked to swing into action. Health and medical services were made available on a broader scale than ever before, so that physical defects might be detected early and perhaps corrected before they became serious. Public school leaders saw to it that more attention was paid to the heating and ventilating systems in school buildings. And the more or less perfunctory "calisthenics" of the classroom became "setting-up exercises" performed with regularity under real supervision.

Meanwhile, in the world outside the schoolroom walls there was an upsurge of interest in camping and hiking and other outdoor activities—an interest that was shared by young and old. Activities which had been luxuries infrequently enjoyed by the few became the commonplace, everyday forms of recreation for people of even moderate means. America, it seemed, was determined to be healthy.

But long before this wave of enthusiasm for physical fitness swept over the country influences had been at work to combat a widespread indifference on the part of the public in general to the human body and its needs, especially among those responsible for the care of children and youth. Among these influences was the parent-teacher organization. "The movement," said one of the Founders in the year of its founding, "is not a reformative one, it is a formative one. Our aim is to lead mothers not in reforming their children, but in forming them, morally, physically, and mentally. Neither is it a philanthropic organization. Its function is obviously as much in the interest of the puny, neglected, overfed, underexercised children of the rich as in the interest of the children of the poor. . . . What deplorable ignorance do we not see on all sides, ignorance not only of the very temperaments of children, but ignorance of their physical needs."

Early Interest of the Congress in Child Health

THIS interest in the physical well-being of the child was expressed, with emphasis, in the program of the very first Congress of Mothers, the historic convention of 1897. "Mothers' Relation to the Sound Physical Development of Youth" was a topic advertised in the advance announcement. One

paper on "Reproduction and Natural Law" was read, and another on the general subject of dietetics. But it seems more than likely that the most impressive health message on that occasion was brought by the display of a model nursery. This convention feature was prepared with the most painstaking care to show just how a cradle should be made up; how baby clothes should be made so as to be comfortable, and presumably in the latest style as well; and what equipment should be provided for the baby's food, rest, and play.

During the decade that followed, there was within the Congress no health program specifically designated as such—a situation readily understood when it is recalled that infant welfare societies did not exist in this country until 1905. There are indications, however, that Congress programs were giving consideration to the welfare of the whole child in terms of its physical and health foundations. At the convention of 1908 a distinguished government expert discussed "Pure Food in the Household." Another speaker made a valuable contribution by telling the story of milk, its adulterations and impurities, showing pictures to illustrate undesirable practices permitted in certain dairies. Patent medicines were made the subject of still another discourse, and both the medicines and alcohol came in for their share of general discussion. At the convention of 1913 a state president described what had been done in her state to foster open-air schools and recommended that the following additional practices be established: use of coarse cotton screens in windows to give pure air of normal humidity; the flushing of all schoolrooms with fresh air three times each school day; and the provision of sufficient adjustable seats in each schoolroom.

These items, with all that they imply, are of interest in that they exemplify the unbroken continuity of Congress policy and objective—to discern and meet the need of the hour. Sometimes the thing most needed was a trail-blazing educational campaign. At other times and in other connections the best service the Congress could possibly render was that of providing a channel through which benefits already available might flow into the homes of the nation. If mothers needed help in making children's clothing or preparing children's meals it was given them. But when the value of the project had been so widely demonstrated that a thousand magazines and newspapers and bulletins were doing that very thing, the parent-teacher organization expended its energies elsewhere to better advantage. When milk was peddled from door to door and obligingly poured into any proffered container, there was a serious health problem to be faced. When an informed and aroused public demanded the delivery of pure milk in sanitary containers and the practice had become firmly established, the "arousers" were then free to stir up sentiment for some other project.

The Growth of Child Hygiene

IT was in 1909 that the Congress began to organize the promotion of child health by the creation of a standing committee for that purpose. Child Hygiene was the name chosen—a name unchanged for many years—and the committee was given the support of an advisory committee consisting of nine physicians. The problem chosen for concerted effort was that of infant mortality. “Baby-saving” was to be its chief concern. Three years later, the President of the United States was informed, in connection with a report on infant mortality, that “the National Congress of Mothers has aroused a nation-wide interest in this subject.” The fruit of this nation-wide interest may be seen today in the public funds made available for maternal and child welfare. No one claimed that the problem was entirely solved. But at least it was recognized as a responsibility to be faced by state and nation.

Beginning with this very definite, fairly limited effort, the health program of the Congress expanded gradually and naturally. By 1926 the original committee had become a department consisting of four committees: Child Hygiene, Physical Education, Social Hygiene, Mental Hygiene. The emphasis now was on the slow processes of all-round education, having to do with the whole child at every stage. “While additional knowledge on child care will undoubtedly result from the further progress of science,” it was said, “nevertheless the application of that wealth of knowledge now available is an urgent need. This implies the wide extension of the present knowledge until every parent knows at least the fundamentals of child health. The parent-teacher organization stands in the strategic position of providing a bridge over which knowledge may travel from the field of expert science to the homes where application must be made.”

The Summer Round-Up

OUT of this expanding interest grew the Summer Round-Up of the Children, which has become an effective phase—as well as the most widely known—of the child health activities of the Congress. The project was undertaken by the membership in the belief that the home is responsible for the health of the preschool child and that the home can make no greater contribution to child health than to send to the school a pupil physically ready for the opportunities which education has to offer. The earliest purpose of the Summer Round-Up was that of arousing the interest of parents in improving the health of children entering school for the first time. It was soon apparent that one of the greatest values in the project was its usability as a medium through which valuable instruction in child

health could be brought to the parents. Later still the purpose of the project was broadened in order to stimulate parents' interest and activity in behalf of a sustained program of continuous medical and dental supervision of children of all ages, including those apparently healthy.

Cooperation with Other Agencies

PROGRAMS for meeting the health needs of children were found to require more direction and promotion than could be given by parent-teacher members alone. Improvements in the techniques of health services, a more widespread understanding of health objectives, and a new insight into child growth and development brought about a recognition of the need for a broadening cooperation with health authorities. Parent-teacher health work became a joint endeavor carried on in cooperation with the community medical, dental, and nursing professions and educational and health agencies.

Today the health program of the National Congress is one which supports and promotes educational procedures in the field of child health; which participates in the coordinating of community resources for health; and finally, which recognizes and endeavors to meet those problems of child health which are rooted in the social and economic structure of the family.

The words spoken by Alice McLellan Birney in her address of welcome to the first National Congress of Mothers still voice today the conviction of the parent-teacher organization: "To cure was the voice of the past; to prevent is the divine whisper of today."

Enlarging the Horizons

AS crisis follows crisis in the arena of world affairs, as old antagonisms grow into hateful forms and new ones are born of unholy unions, it is of some interest to know what the parent-teacher organization has done, what it is doing, to build the better world for which humanity longs. What has been done to promote international understanding, to strengthen the bonds of international friendship, and thus hasten the advent of world security and faith?

In a sense not intended by the song so popular in World War days, the first and greatest responsibility of the Congress in its earlier years was to "keep the home fires burning." Mothers were to have more knowledge, broader vision, greater skill. Children were to be better nourished, more sensibly clad, and more securely protected. Families were to learn and

practice the fine art of living, in homes that radiated good will. The extension of this idea to include the child's school and the child's teachers was a natural step taken in due time. It could not long escape the serious attention of alert leaders that both home and school were in a give-and-take relation with the community which was "home" to them both, a community in which there existed a clear "commonness" of interest which bound each to each. The American small town was such a unit. And other rural areas and certain sections in cities presented like situations. These communities provided the setting, the atmosphere, in which Congress activities were carried on—health and recreational programs, parent education, juvenile protection, and all the rest of the familiar list.

International Movements

WHEN far-visioned leaders thought in international terms it was with the idea that parents and teachers in similar communities in foreign countries might help and be helped if there could be a meeting ground for ideas on the vital subject of child welfare. So, as early as 1908, there was held the first International Congress on the Welfare of the Child. The official program carried this explanatory statement:

"The National Congress of Mothers of the United States has been studying the needs of childhood for the past ten years and through its local circles and annual conferences has endeavored to secure the highest physical, mental, and moral development of the race. With the purpose of stimulating world-wide interest in these subjects, the International Congress has been held."

This excellent idea was excellently carried out, and conferences of like scope were called in 1911 and 1914. As the Congress played a larger and larger part in American life, its leaders were more and more called upon to contribute to the thought in international conferences on subjects falling within its field. Among these, to mention but a few, were the World Conference on Education at Edinburgh; the first Pan-Pacific Conference on Education, Reclamation, and Recreation at Honolulu; and the World Federation of Education Associations. At the close of the 1927 Conference of the World Federation of Education Associations there was formed, in response to demand, the International Federation of Home and School, with the president of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers as its first president.

By this time the voice of the Congress was making itself heard in behalf of child welfare in communities scattered far and wide. But also, a new idea was in the making—the idea that the world itself is a community, that the comparatively small territory which provides the setting for parent-

teacher local effort actually takes its character from the world whole of which it is in turn a part. A shot rang out in Serbia, a defiant host marched across Belgium, and in a few short years life in every corner of America was different. Other countries were different, too. In several countries there sprouted some strange ideas; soon they were discharging their seed pods on this side of the Atlantic. To keep the home fires burning was still of prime importance, but parents and teachers had to remember that the group around the fire was thinking different thoughts because of swiftly moving events in a changing world. Children might still love their tin soldiers and toy pistols, but their elders were saying "No more war." How was that to be made a reality instead of a wish? Gradually there was being opened a new field of international relations by the legitimate exercise of parent-teacher influence and effort.

Toward Brotherhood and Peace

IN 1915 the national president reported to the Board that she had been invited to take an active part in four national movements for the extension of peace. The Board voted to express the sympathy of the Congress with these movements and to cooperate with "The National Conference of Women Workers to Promote Permanent Peace." The 1918 report of the Board of Managers records the appointment of an International committee, for which, says the report, "the necessity is obvious." Through this committee the Congress expressed its interest in the work of the National Council of Women and the International Council of Women; arranged for representation at conferences of the sort mentioned above; and presented resolutions for adoption by the annual convention. Among the public welfare issues endorsed by the Congress, the first was that of peace. The organization took a stand for: (1) reduction of armaments by international agreement; (2) codification of international law; (3) some lasting organization of nations. As yet, however, there was no program of activity comparable to those offered in other fields of parent-teacher endeavor. Such a program was first organized by the committee on International Relations created as recently as 1932.

Two things stand out as important when one reviews the work of such a committee: first, the committee's idea of the ends to be obtained; second, the means developed by Congress units for the gaining of these ends. How the committee defined its task is clearly seen from early reports of the national chairman. "Our work is the establishment of international understanding and friendship through education and through the development of opportunity for personal appreciation of the good qualities which every race or nationality possesses. . . . While advanced efforts of a high type

have been made in other organizations, there has been little or no attempt to reach the general public, especially the parents and other citizens whose interest as patrons is around the schools, and to enlist their cooperation in a program which will go to the root of the problem of world understanding. . . . As the strength of our movement lies in the work of the individual members of its thousands of local units, so the Congress has endeavored to begin to work in this new field by bringing the whole question of international relations down to the terms of the everyday life of the community. While statesmen and rulers may declare war, it is the people who must do the fighting and it is, therefore, the people who must understand the basis on which war or peace actually rests." Briefly put, the declared objective of the committee was "public education for world friendship."

Statements of purpose in these early reports are accompanied by two warnings, repeatedly given. First, the missionary attitude toward those of different nationality must be avoided. "The Congress has a great opportunity to render a signal service and to escape from the repeated tendency for one race to 'look down upon' another, by turning the thought of the whole group to the school as the 'unit that unites,' as it ministers its own nationalities without regard to racial background." Second, the nonpartisan principle of the Congress must be maintained. "In the efforts toward international and interracial understanding, this principle takes on a new value. Many groups with admirable programs seem to see in this newly created committee another possible agency to influence political or partisan action. The attitude of the Congress on such points has been laid down and should be clearly adhered to."

World Friendship Through Understanding

SO much for principles. Now what of the programs worked out by state branches and local units? These seem to have followed two main lines. There are the programs of appreciation which seem to break down the "missionary attitude." These include exhibitions of handicraft; pageants of various kinds planned to familiarize children with the music, the dances, the dress, and the worth of children of other lands; letters written by children to children of other countries; international days; assistance given to the foreign-born who desire to become citizens; and encouragement given to foreign groups to participate in parent-teacher activities. World Good Will Day, Pan-American Day, International Peace Day, Armistice Day—these have provided opportunity for timely and appropriate expression of the world friendship theme.

In addition there have been programs of study, working more definitely toward the building of a system of ideas, as distinguished from sentiments,

on the subject of international relations. Numerous organizations devoted to the cause of peace have seen to it that there is no dearth of material in print, and speakers are not difficult to obtain in most communities. So there have been informative lectures, study groups, forums, and radio programs, all looking toward the large objective of promoting an understanding of the conditions that make for international tension and lead to wars.

It is in this connection that the second of the warnings noted above becomes pertinent, for it is easy to mask a partisan interest under a supposedly altruistic and humanitarian cause, and at a time of great national and world stress there is increased danger of involvement in some such effort. There are in existence many organizations working actively and definitely for partisan ends, and it is through these organizations that individuals with partisan convictions should seek an outlet for their expression. The Congress, opening its membership to those of all varieties of opinion, avoids all controversy on matters of religion, politics, or any other topic that calls for the expression of sectarian or partisan belief. In this it occupies a unique position, and in no phase of its public service is this belief more evident than in its work for world friendship through understanding.

From the beginning the committee on International Relations recognized the school as the melting pot in which the children, either foreign-born or of foreign parentage, can be fused into one national spirit and become Americans. It believed that the parents of these children are among those who are to be drawn into fellowship and who need most the friendly atmosphere of the parent-teacher association. A positive attitude has always been assumed—a positive attitude which works toward the attainment of world friendship through understanding, so that by “learning to know, respect, and love our neighbor whom we *have* seen, it may eventually become impossible for us to hate or to fight against his brothers whom we have *not* seen.”

Varied Activities

THOUGH it is not possible to give even a brief summary of the work being done today by parent-teacher groups, some of the activities are especially worthy of mention. Plans have been worked out in cooperation with teachers of social science, civics, history, geography, music, and art. Friendliness and appreciation have been emphasized, collaboration has been established with other important state and local agencies, and international relations have been featured on local, district, and state programs. Original and successful programs have been worked out in many localities, ranging from great city councils to the smallest of rural associations, each finding some vivid, colorful method of presenting the great objective of world friendli-

ness through education, understanding, and practical demonstration. All these programs are planned to show to children and adults the contributions of all nations to world progress, the interdependence of all nations, and the economic necessity for peaceful communication among nations.

Today more and more parent-teacher members are enlarging their vision of this phase of Congress activity for the welfare of children and youth. They are seeing its significance on the child's level as well as on the adult's level. From a recent report of the purpose of the International Relations committee, the following statements are significant: "It is essential that we keep at peace with the world, and the adult citizen must study and know the best ways to accomplish this. It is essential to a larger degree that the coming generation grow into world citizens with an appreciation of international justice; with an understanding of the importance and contribution of all nations to the progress of civilization; with a feeling of friendship for children of other races, other nationalities, other creeds; and, above all, with a sense of integrity and a regard for promises made or word given. A generation so trained will think and live peace and will not easily be incited to war. Those who wish peace must write it in the hearts of children."

One Dominant Motive

THE task of this chapter is to review briefly the origin and progress of parent-teacher committee work in order to give to parent-teacher members a clearer and more consistent picture of their total program of child welfare as it operates today. Starting with the inception of the subject, the project or committee has been traced to its present form and function, the material being drawn largely from minutes of meetings, committee reports, and plans of work.

In surveying the scope of parent-teacher work, one tends to characterize a given period by the most significant development of that era—to speak of certain administrations in terms of their emphasis upon the home, the school, or the community. Indeed, much that has been written on this subject lends itself to the forming of such a conception. Yet as one goes back and begins to reminisce, one fact becomes amazingly clear and impressive: At no time in the history of Congress work were human services to childhood subordinated to any other dominant motive. In each field of human interest—physical, mental, religious, economic, political, artistic—it can be observed that no project or activity has existed for its own sake alone; rather it has justified itself in terms of the contribution made to the well-being of children. This was true in the earliest days of the parent-teacher movement; it has been true ever since.

1897 to 1910: Awakened Concern for the Child

THE years between 1897 and 1910 were a period of great progress. Attention was directed to the development of work fundamental to the young child's care and safety. The physical and social conditions under which children lived and grew were a matter of profound concern to the Congress of Mothers, and great strides were made toward bettering them. This was a real achievement, expressing an enhanced appreciation of the knowledge that was being accumulated in various child welfare centers and institutions throughout the country. The creation of such committees as Child Labor, Education, Home Economics, and Child Hygiene was an outgrowth of the interest and effort that marked this period. Concern for the child revealed itself in a program of legislation aimed at the patent evils of a society which penalized children for its own faults. Organized motherhood could not be indifferent to the needs of the defective, delinquent, and dependent members of the great American household. It is not surprising to learn that during this period public expenditures increased for playgrounds, good roads, school improvement, and juvenile courts.

1911 to 1929: Physical and Social Health

THE decade that followed witnessed a many-sided development along lines broadened and defined in terms of health. One notes the growth of interest in everything that has to do with wholesome living. Recreation was given a place of real importance, and so interpreted that parents and teachers could not fail to see its relationship to what they were trying unitedly to accomplish. The vexing problem of the juvenile delinquent was seen as a challenge to the playground no less than to the home and to the school. It was seen, too, that the academic problems faced by the school were more likely to be solved if children came to school in fit physical condition. But this was not all. In keeping with the trend of the times, the parent-teacher organization developed a program looking toward what has since become widely spoken of as social health. Such was the real objective of committee activities variously known as marriage sanctity, monogamous marriage, and racial health. Toward the end of the postwar decade the Congress recognized by the creation of a new committee the new field of mental hygiene, thus emphasizing wholesome living.

This was also a period in which psychology and sociology contributed to the equipment of parents and teachers something that could justly be called new knowledge, and since the home remained the center and soul of all parent-teacher activity, a fresh impetus was given to the significant work of parent education as a specialized program.

1930 to the Present: Citizenship in a Democracy

A DEEPENED understanding of what is really fundamental in child welfare bore fruit in the 1930's in a fuller appreciation of the role of public education. The individual child's relationship to the school and to his individual teacher had always been recognized as an important factor in his growth and happiness. But with the richer development of the "social consciousness" that has marked the decade in which we now live came the awareness that education must also concern itself with the more intimate connections of the child with his friends, his neighbors, and with the members of his own family. The old view which considered knowledge of the three R's as the chief end of education was no longer acceptable.

The social motive in education was carried further, and recognition was given to the fact that the schools must prepare boys and girls for active and right-thinking citizenship. As a consequence of this new emphasis, educators began to re-examine the meaning and purpose of education, and it is only recently that they have issued what is perhaps the most comprehensive statement of the objectives of education in American democracy. To fulfill its responsibility in the achievement of these objectives, the parent-teacher organization made them a part of its educational thinking and is today pressing them into the fabric of American life.

This same emphasis upon seeing children as whole beings, within settings that have bearing on what they are, led parents and teachers to examine more critically those agencies that were assuming significant places in our society. Of these the motion picture was acknowledged as exerting tremendous influence in the education of the child; hence the parent-teacher organization began to play an important part in the wise integrating of this medium of education into our social system and in the establishing of those attitudes and controls which will safeguard children and youth.

Another agency of vital importance in its effect upon the lives of children is the radio. Parents and teachers early recognized the fact that radio was doing something to society, that the American scene upon which children were taking their place was being profoundly affected by all that was being heard over the air. And here again they found the opportunity to further social progress by initiating a program to increase the use of radio for educational, cultural, and civic purposes.

The 1930's wrote other fresh chapters in the history of parent-teacher work. One significant chapter deals with the realization that modern inventions and conditions have brought the nations of the world closer together. Through the committees on International Relations and Character Education, as well as the more recently organized committee on Citizen-

ship, the parent-teacher organization has redoubled its efforts to develop those attitudes in children that make practical the dream of a society in which the ideals of democracy will be attained.

An Unchanging Purpose

SO, as parent-teacher tomorrows have turned into today's, the ideas and programs of the association have undergone a gradual development, of which the fruits are seen in American communities far and wide. With the flow of events in a changing world, the pattern of activity has changed in ways that may make 1940 appear outwardly very different from 1900. Projects have changed, but purposes have not. And in those purposes there is a power that makes for achievement. If the era in which we live can rightly be called "the age of the child," it is due in no small measure to the fact that the parent-teacher movement has really moved, not merely existed.

The movement goes on, as time goes on. There is no standstill. Even as these surveys called *PROJECTS AND PURPOSES* were being prepared, the past, of relative peace and security so far as our nation was concerned, was turning into a present of confusion and uncertainty. But where the welfare of the child is concerned, no course is thinkable but an onward course. It is the glory of the P.T.A. that it is stable but not static—the expression of an unchanging purpose in a swiftly changing world.

ETHICS OF MONEY RAISING

THE *real purposes* for which parent-teacher associations are organized are to be found in the fields of parent education, home and school cooperation, and community betterment. Money-raising activities should not be allowed to divert the attention of members from these main purposes. When undertaken, money raising should be kept in the background, and funds should never be solicited at meetings.

Plans for the budget for the year that include money-making devices should be made after a careful study of the objects, policies, and guiding principles of parent-teacher associations. The proposed budget should be presented to the association at the beginning of the year for free and frank discussion as to the need for money and the means of raising it before a decision is made.

One large entertainment, carefully planned, can usually be made the occasion for raising the funds necessary to finance the legitimate activities of the association for the year. This entertainment should be of definite educational value, but should also be of social value in helping people to get acquainted and to have a good time by working and playing together. As large a number of members as possible should participate and cliques should be avoided.

The local school administrators should always be consulted about the type of entertainment to be presented by the association. Voluntary contributions are sometimes preferred to an admission charge.

Purchase of school equipment of any sort should not be made except after consultation with the principal of the school and members of the school board. This should prevent undesirable and unnecessary expenditures. Teachers often make the mistake of expecting the parent-teacher association to provide conveniences for the school that should be provided from public money. Parents sometimes make the mistake of thinking that giving material aid to the school is the function of a parent-teacher association and dissipate their energies in raising money when the needs should have been supplied from public funds.

Every precaution should be taken to guard against getting into debt or violating the noncommercial policy of the Congress. Gambling, raffling, exploitation of children, or any form of entertainment that may be detrimental to character building in the community should never be undertaken.

PARENT-TEACHER TERMINOLOGY

THE use of the correct terminology in reference to parent-teacher organizations and parent-teacher activities promotes a knowledge of the structure and functions of such organizations and activities and prevents confusion and misunderstanding. The following terms have been adopted by the National Congress as correct.

LOCAL CONGRESS UNIT

1. Local unit; Congress unit; Congress association. These are general terms that apply to all types of *local* Congress organizations. Note: Circle, league, society, club, and chapter are *not* Congress terms.

2. The (name of school) Parent-Teacher Association. The initials P.T.A. are frequently used for the sake of brevity.

3. Study group is the general title used to designate a group of the members of a Congress unit meeting regularly for study, reading, listening in, or discussion of subjects approved by the national or the state organization.

COUNCIL

1. A council is a group of Congress parent-teacher associations organized for conference and cooperation.

2. The (name of city or county) Council of Parent-Teacher Associations is the preferred title for a city, county, or community conference group of Congress units. (Not league or federation.)

3. President is the customary title of the first officer of the council.

DISTRICT OR REGION

1. A district or region is a geographical division of the state congress, set up for convenience in administering state congress affairs.

2. Districts or regions are usually designated by number, as the Ninth District or Region; or by location, as the Southeast District or the Northwest Region.

3. District or regional conference, not convention, is the term used for the semiannual, annual, or biennial meeting.

4. District president, regional president, district director, and regional director are the titles most frequently used to designate the first officer of the district or region.

STATE

1. State branch. This term indicates the relationship of the state organization to the National Congress, and should be used only when emphasizing the idea

of *branch* relationship. The forty-eight state congresses, the District of Columbia Congress, and the Hawaii Congress are *branches* of the National Congress.

2. The (name of state) Congress of Parents and Teachers. This is the name most generally used to designate the state organization.

3. State board of managers. State board, for short.

4. State executive committee. The term "executive board" is used only where a state organization has one representative body instead of both a *board* of managers *and* an executive committee.

5. *Bulletin*, not magazine, is the term used for the periodical publication of a state congress. *Magazine* is reserved for the *National Parent-Teacher*, the official magazine of the National Congress.

6. State office is the term used for the state headquarters of the state congress.

NATIONAL

1. National Congress of Parents and Teachers. The Congress, or the National Congress, for short.

2. National Board of Managers, or National Board.

3. National Executive Committee.

4. National standing committee on [Citizenship]. National chairman of the committee on [Citizenship].

5. National Office. This term is used for the business office of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, which is located at 600 South Michigan Boulevard, Chicago 5, Illinois.

6. Congress publications. This applies to all books, pamphlets, booklets, and other publications of the National Congress.

7. The *National Parent-Teacher*. This is the official magazine of the National Congress.

8. The *National Congress Bulletin*. This is a monthly news bulletin sent to each local president. It is also sent to others on a subscription basis.

PARENT-TEACHER MEMBERSHIP

1. An individual *joins* a local Congress unit.

2. A group organizes *as* a Congress unit or *becomes* a Congress unit by harmonizing its bylaws with state and National Bylaws and paying state and national portions of membership dues for each member. These groups are *in membership* with the state and national organizations.

The term "*joining* the state and national congresses" is not used for groups, since only individuals may join the organization.

Affiliate and *federate* are not Congress terms and are not used to designate the relationship of local units to the state and national congresses.

BYLAWS

As Amended at the Annual Convention, May 1942

San Antonio, Texas

ARTICLE I

Name

The name of this organization shall be the National Congress of Parents and Teachers.

ARTICLE II

Objects

The objects of the National Congress shall be:

To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, church, and community.

To raise the standards of home life.

To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth.

To bring into closer relation the home and the school that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the training of the child.

To develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for every child the highest advantages in physical, mental, social, and spiritual education.

ARTICLE III

Policies

Section 1. The program of the Congress shall be educational and shall be developed through conferences, committees, and projects.

Section 2. This organization shall be noncommercial, nonsectarian, and nonpartisan. No commercial enterprise and no candidate shall be endorsed by it. The name of the Congress, its branches, or its officers in their official capacities shall not be used in any connection with a commercial concern or with any partisan interest, or for any other purpose than the regular work of the Congress.

Section 3. The Congress, its local units, and its branches shall not seek to direct the administrative activities of the schools or to control their policies.

Section 4. The Congress shall not enter into membership with other or-

ganizations save that of the International Federation of Home and School and such other international or national organizations as may be approved by the national Board of Managers. A state branch or any of its divisions may cooperate with other organizations and agencies active in child welfare and may enter into membership with Congress groups. They may enter into membership with conference groups or coordinating councils uniting for child welfare and making no commitments which bind their member groups.

ARTICLE IV *Membership*

Section 1. Any person interested in the objects of the Congress may become a member upon payment of dues as hereinafter provided.

The members of the National Congress shall be the individual members of the state branches and the individual members of the local organizations in unorganized states.

Section 2. Any person may become a life member upon payment of the fee hereinafter provided. Life membership shall be honorary and shall carry neither the right to vote nor to hold office.

ARTICLE V *Officers and Their Election*

Section 1. The officers of the National Congress shall be a president, ten vice-presidents, a secretary, and a treasurer elected for a term of three years. These officers shall be divided into three groups: Group one shall consist of the president, first vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. Group two shall consist of the vice-presidents from Regions III, V, VII, and VIII. Group three shall consist of the second vice-president and the vice-presidents from Regions I, II, IV, and VI. Group one shall be elected in 1940 and the others in numerical order.

Section 2. The first and second vice-presidents shall be chosen from the membership of the Congress-at-large. The other eight vice-presidents shall be chosen from regions prescribed by the Board of Managers.

Section 3. Only a member of a local unit shall be eligible to hold office in the National Congress. No officer shall be eligible for two consecutive terms in the same office. Persons having served in one vice-presidency from a certain designated region shall not be eligible to another vice-presidency except that of the first or second. Persons having served in one vice-presidency shall not be eligible to another vice-presidency except as stated above until the expiration of at least one term. No person shall serve on the Board of Managers in more than one capacity. (This statement shall not apply to state presidents whose terms expire within six months of the national election, nor to any member of the Board of Managers who shall be elected as president of National Parent-Teacher, Inc., and whose term expires within the same length of time.)

Section 4. A nominating committee of five members shall be elected by ballot by the Board of Managers at its regular post-convention meeting. This committee shall nominate a candidate for each office to be filled at the next convention, and shall send a report of these nominations to the secretary, who shall send a copy to each member of the national Board of Managers at least sixty days before the convention. The committee shall report to the convention on the first day, at which time additional nominations may be made from the floor provided the consent of the nominee has been secured.

After the election of group one the nominating committee shall present to the Board of Managers at the post-convention Board meeting nominations for three members-at-large, chosen from the Board of Managers, to serve on the Executive Committee.

Section 5. The Executive Committee shall choose an Election Board of five members who shall have full charge of the election, including the printing of the official ballot. This Committee shall be notified of its election at least thirty days before the convention. The names of all nominees shall be printed on this ballot, but voting shall not be limited to such nominees.

Election shall be by ballot on the second day of the annual convention, and the newly elected officers shall assume their duties at the close of the convention at which they have been elected.

Section 6. A vacancy in any office shall be filled by the Board of Managers for the unexpired term. Elections shall be by ballot if more than one candidate for an office is presented. If a ten-day notice of the election has been given to the members of the Board, a majority vote shall elect, otherwise a two-thirds vote of the members present shall be necessary.

Section 7. The title of honorary president or vice-president may be conferred for life upon a person by the convention upon the recommendation of the Board of Managers, provided the number of honorary presidents shall at no time exceed one and the honorary vice-presidents shall at no time exceed ten. The Board of Managers shall vote by ballot, and a three-fourths vote shall be required for the recommendation. The title of honorary officer shall carry with it all privileges of the convention except the right to vote.

ARTICLE VI *Duties of Officers*

Section 1. The officers shall perform the duties prescribed by these Bylaws and by the parliamentary authority adopted by the Congress.

Section 2. The president shall preside at all meetings of the Congress, the Board of Managers, and the Executive Committee, and shall be ex officio a member of all committees except the nominating committee. The president shall select a parliamentarian who shall be approved by the Executive Committee.

Section 3. In case of the absence or inability of the president to discharge the duties of the office, such duties shall be performed by the first vice-president and the second vice-president in their order. The order of precedence of the vice-presidents from regions shall be decided annually by the Executive Committee. The first and second vice-presidents shall act as aides to the president. The duties of the other vice-presidents shall be determined by the Executive Committee.

Section 4. The secretary shall keep a correct record of all meetings of the National Congress, the Board of Managers, and the Executive Committee; shall notify members of their appointment to committees; shall send out minutes and notices of meetings of the Congress, the Board, and the Executive Committee; and shall conduct such correspondence as the Congress, the Board, and the Executive Committee shall direct.

Section 5. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive and collect all moneys due the Congress, to be custodian of the funds of the National Congress with the exception of the Endowment Fund, and to deposit the funds in depositories approved by the Board of Managers. The treasurer shall disburse the funds of the National Congress only in accordance with the budget approved by the Board of Managers or pursuant to an appropriation especially made by the Board of Managers. The treasurer is authorized to delegate his authority to disburse funds of the National Congress to one or more persons approved by the Executive Committee; but where such funds are disbursed by persons other than the treasurer it shall be only upon authority granted by the president or by an officer designated by the president.

The treasurer shall present a statement of accounts at all meetings of the Board of Managers and at the request of the president, and shall make an audited report at the annual convention. The Board of Managers shall require and authorize payment of fidelity bonds, in such amounts as shall be determined by the Board, for the treasurer and all other persons handling Congress funds. The accounts of the treasurer shall be audited by a certified public accountant recommended by the chairman of the budget committee and approved by that committee. In case of temporary absence or inability to serve, the duties of the treasurer shall be performed until the next meeting of the Board of Managers by a person chosen by the president with the approval of a majority of the budget committee.

ARTICLE VII

Conventions

Section 1. A regular convention of the National Congress shall be held annually at a date not earlier than April 30, the time and place to be determined by the Executive Committee. Notice of such meeting shall be sent to each

member of the national Board of Managers at least sixty days before the meeting.

Section 2. The annual convention shall be the governing body of the National Congress.

Section 3. The convention of the National Congress shall be open to all members upon payment of the registration fee of one dollar.

Section 4. At the annual convention each state branch shall be entitled to be represented by its president, three other state officers or their alternates, and one delegate for each one thousand members or major fraction thereof, as shown on the books of the national treasurer. The selection of these delegates and their alternates shall be made or authorized by the board of managers of that state.

Section 5. A voting member shall have but one vote, though entitled to vote in more than one capacity. The privilege of making motions, debating, and voting shall be limited to the Board of Managers and to the accredited delegates from each state branch.

Section 6. One hundred and fifty delegates representing a majority of the state branches shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE VIII *Board of Managers*

Section 1. The officers of the National Congress; the president of each state branch or, on his inability to serve, his alternate elected by the state board; the chairmen of standing committees; and the president of National Parent-Teacher, Inc., shall constitute the Board of Managers.

Section 2. Regular meetings of the Board shall be held immediately before and after each annual convention and in September of each year, the time and place of the meetings to be decided by the Executive Committee. Special meetings may be called by the president and must be called upon the written request of nine members of the Board. At least ten days' notice shall be given in the call.

Section 3. The Board of Managers shall have all authority over the affairs of the National Congress during the interim between annual conventions, except that authority vested in the Executive Committee or that of modifying any action taken by the convention. It shall have authority to adopt rules for the transaction of its business provided they do not conflict with these Bylaws.

Section 4. The Board of Managers shall settle all questions of doubt regarding the recognition of organized units.

Section 5. There shall be an Endowment Fund, the management of which under a written agreement of trust shall be entrusted to three (3) trustees, one of whom shall be the treasurer of the National Congress. The other two shall be elected by the Board of Managers. The term of office shall be three years.

The term of one trustee shall expire each year. The trustees, except the treasurer, shall be eligible for re-election for one term only. Any trustee of the Endowment Fund may be removed at any time by the Board of Managers. Any vacancy occurring in the Board of Trustees of the Endowment Fund shall be filled by the Board of Managers. The trustees shall hold at least one meeting each year. The treasurer of the Congress shall be the chairman of the Board of Trustees.

The Endowment Trustees shall designate an agent, approved by the Board of Managers, who shall act as depository for said fund and shall be authorized to invest and re-invest the same, subject to the approval of the Endowment Trustees. Such agent may be changed from time to time at the discretion of the Endowment Trustees, subject always to approval by the Board of Managers.

The income received from the Endowment Fund shall be used by the National Congress of Parents and Teachers only for the expenses and maintenance of its headquarters, the expense of field service, and the expenses of its Executive Committee and the Board of Managers.

The agreement of trust with said Endowment Trustees hereinabove provided for may be amended at any meeting of the Board of Managers by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the entire membership of the Board.

Section 6. A majority of the members of the Board shall constitute a quorum.

Section 7. Each member of the Board of Managers shall submit a report for inclusion in the annual report of the Congress.

Section 8. No member of the Board of Managers shall go into a state as a representative of the National Congress for service in connection with parent-teacher work, local or state, without the consent of the state president or the state board of managers.

ARTICLE IX *Executive Committee*

Section 1. The Executive Committee of the National Congress shall be composed of the national officers and three members-at-large elected by the Board of Managers from its membership. These members-at-large shall serve for three years unless their membership on the Board ceases. They shall be ineligible for two consecutive terms.

Section 2. The Executive Committee shall meet at the call of the president or upon the request of seven members of the Committee. Seven members shall constitute a quorum. Minutes of the meetings shall be sent to all members of the Board of Managers. Reports and recommendations shall be made to the Board when the Executive Committee meets just prior to or during the meeting of the Board.

Section 3. The Executive Committee shall perform the duties delegated to it in these Bylaws, shall transact all business referred to it by the Board of

Managers, and shall act in emergencies. No action of the committee shall conflict with that of the Board of Managers.

Section 4. The Executive Committee shall decide questions of cooperation with other national organizations.

Section 5. The Executive Committee shall be the program committee for each national convention of the Congress.

Section 6. The Executive Committee shall receive and pass upon the plans of each chairman of a standing committee and shall authorize and direct the work of each.

Section 7. The Executive Committee shall appoint annually from recommendations made by the president such employees as may be necessary to carry on the work of the National Congress; it shall fix their salaries and define their duties. These appointments shall be made at the regular meeting of the Executive Committee following the convention. The president may from time to time appoint, with the approval of the budget committee, such additional employees as may be found necessary.

Section 8. No employee shall be sent into a state for state congress work without the approval of the state president or of the state board of managers.

ARTICLE X

Dues and Fees

Section 1. Dues for active members shall be all-inclusive, for membership in the national, the state, and a local unit, such dues to be apportioned by the national, state, and local bylaws, respectively. In organized states, the annual dues to the National Congress shall be five cents per capita for all members of each local unit. The treasurer of each local unit shall send the annual national and state portion of the dues of each individual member in the unit to the treasurer of the state branch through such channels and at such times as the state bylaws may specify. The local treasurer shall keep the national and state portions of the membership dues in a fund separate from the general funds of the local unit. The treasurer of the state branch shall send quarterly to the national treasurer the amount of national dues on hand, accompanied by a statement giving the name and location of each local unit from which dues were received and the number of members in each local unit.

Section 2. In unorganized states, the annual dues to the National Congress shall be ten cents for each member of a local unit. The treasurer of the local unit shall remit these dues annually to the national treasurer on or before April 1, accompanied by a statement giving the name and address of the president.

Section 3. The fee payable for a National Congress life membership shall be \$50, and shall be made a part of the national Endowment Fund.

Section 4. Each state branch shall be authorized to determine in its bylaws the fee which will constitute a state life membership.

Section 5. The fiscal year shall be from April 15 to April 15.

ARTICLE XI *Standing Committees*

Section 1. Such standing committees may be created by the Board of Managers as shall be found necessary to carry on the work of the National Congress.

Section 2. Nominations for chairmen of standing committees shall be made by a committee of seven elected by ballot by the Board of Managers at its regular post-convention meeting preceding the convention at which the president is elected. The committee shall send a list of nominations to the special electing group composed of the newly elected officers, the holdover officers, the presidents of state branches, and the president of National Parent-Teacher, Inc., not later than noon of the third day of the convention.

Chairmen of standing committees shall be elected triennially by the above group on the third evening of the convention.

Section 3. No chairman shall be eligible for more than two consecutive terms.

Section 4. Each standing committee shall consist of a national chairman and such other persons as may be approved by the Board of Managers.

The chairman of each standing committee following election shall submit a tentative plan of work for approval to the Executive Committee. No work shall be undertaken without the consent of the Executive Committee.

If a chairman fails to submit a plan by the appointed time, the position may be declared vacant. If any chairman fails to work toward carrying out the plans submitted and approved, the Board may, upon a majority vote of its members present at any meeting, remove such a chairman. No material or form letters shall be sent out without the approval of the president or a national officer designated by the president.

ARTICLE XII *State Branches*

Section 1. Local parent-teacher associations and other child welfare groups may be organized by the state branch as units of the National Congress. Groups become Congress units upon their adoption of bylaws in harmony with the state and national bylaws and approved by the state board of managers or its appointees and upon the payment of dues for every member. The purpose of these organizations shall be to promote the objects and policies of the Congress. Each local unit may make its own rules for the transaction of its business and the admittance of its members, provided they do not conflict with the Bylaws

of the National Congress and of the state branch. Only a member of a local unit shall be eligible to hold office in any division of the state branch.

Section 2. When a state or territory has developed representative local units of the National Congress, it may request organization as a state branch, which request shall be acted upon by the Executive Committee.

Section 3. Each state branch shall be authorized to adopt such rules as do not conflict with the Bylaws of the National Congress. The state bylaws shall be approved by the national Board of Managers upon the recommendation of some officer or group to whom the work is delegated.

Section 4. All questions involving the failure of states to comply with the National Bylaws shall be decided by the national Board of Managers by a two-thirds vote.

Section 5. The purpose of a state branch shall be to promote the objects and policies of the National Congress. A state branch may legislate for local units, provided such legislation does not conflict with the Bylaws of the National Congress.

Section 6. Each state branch may provide for the organization of districts as geographical divisions of the state for convenience of administration of state work and for the organization of councils in counties, cities, or other areas designated by the state board of managers, for the purpose of conference and cooperation of local units. Only Congress units shall be members of a council. These groups shall be governed by bylaws approved by the state board of managers or by some officer or group to whom the work is delegated. They shall not legislate for the local units.

Section 7. Each state branch may provide for state standing committees to correspond with the national standing committees. It shall be the duty of the state committee to endeavor to carry out the plans submitted by the like committee of the National Congress.

ARTICLE XIII *Amendments to Bylaws*

These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote at any annual convention provided the proposed amendment has been approved by the national Board of Managers after being proposed by the Executive Committee or by a committee appointed by the Board of Managers. A copy of the proposed amendment shall be sent by the secretary to each member of the national Board at least sixty days before the convention.

ARTICLE XIV

Authority

Robert's Rules of Order Revised shall govern this organization in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these Bylaws.

NOTE: The Bylaws of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers are subject to amendment. From time to time certain changes may be made. Instructors using this text may at all times secure up-to-date copies of the National Bylaws by forwarding a request to the National Office of the organization, 600 South Michigan Boulevard, Chicago 5, Illinois.

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